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ABSTRACT

This series of 19 newsletters is designed to be distributed monthly to parents of premature or high risk infants on their child's adjusted age birthday from birth through 18 months. Each newsletter describes activities and behaviors of infants and toddlers appropriate to the month of age and discusses issues of concern to the parents. Regular topics include safety, discipline, and "premie notes," a section that addresses the particular characteristics or problems associated with prematurity and its effect on later development. For ages 3-12 months activities typical of infant behavior or which the baby will enjoy having the parent initiate are listed under the headings of moving, playing, thinking, and communicating. Other topics covered for specific ages include going home from the hospital (newborn), when to call the doctor (2 months), settling into a routine (3 months), the father's role (6 months), communicating (11 months), and imitation (12 months). Additional newsletters focus on such topics as thinking about another pregnancy, play as learning, setting limits for toddlers, and encouraging self-esteem. (VW)

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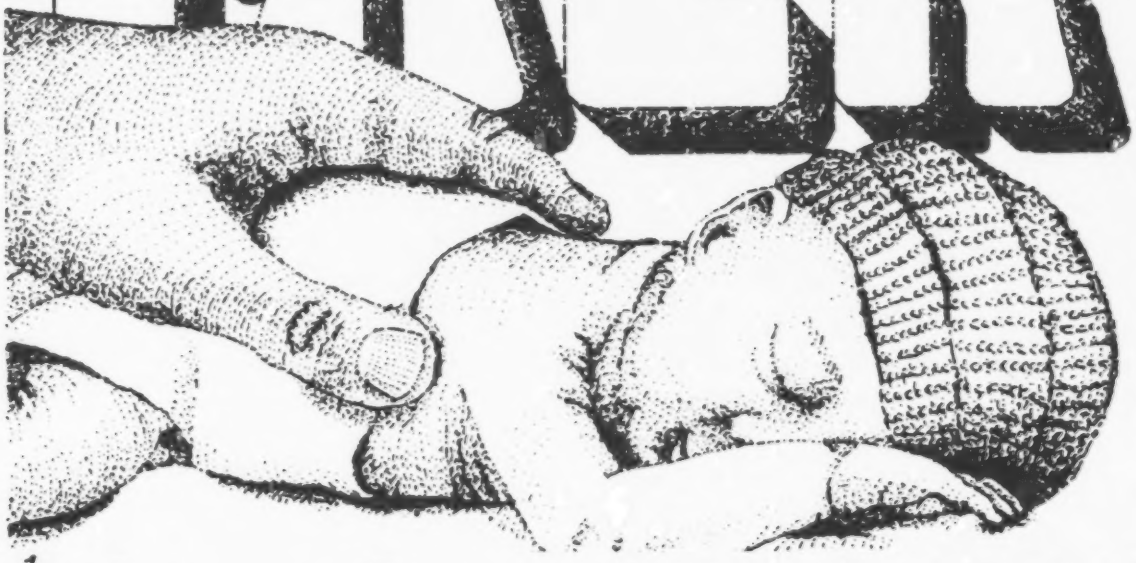
# BABY TALK



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Baby Talk is written especially for parents of premature or high risk infants with practical tips on development and parenting.

COMPLETED

**PROJECT ENLIGHTENMENT**
**WAKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**
**RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA**

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BABY TALK is a series of newsletters for parents of high risk infants birth through eighteen months. These newsletters were developed by First Years Together through a grant from Handicapped Children's Early Education Program, U.S. Office of Special Education to Project Enlightenment, Wake County Public School System, 501 S. Boylan Ave., Raleigh, N.C. 27603. For additional information, write or call (919) 755-6935.

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Linda Carothers and Val Wilson, EDITORS

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# FIRST YEARS TOGETHER

First Years Together is a demonstration service and training model which maximizes the social-emotional, physical, and cognitive development of high-risk infants. The project has attempted to address the special needs of parents who have endured the emotional and financial hardships that are encountered when a baby is hospitalized. The project links medical, educational, mental health, and public health resources, providing the coordination that is needed but often lacking when infants are high-risk. It is a program which promotes parent and professional partnerships that focus on normal development as well as social-emotional vulnerabilities of preterm and high-risk infants and their families. First Years Together provides services at levels of intensity which are tailored to the specific needs of the child and family.

## ABOUT PROJECT ENLIGHTENMENT

Project Enlightenment is a comprehensive preschool mental health program within the Wake County Public School System. The Project works with children from birth through the completion of kindergarten, their parents, and teachers around the developmental and emotional growth of children. Services of the Project include:

- Parent workshops, classes and support groups
- Parent and family counseling
- TALKline: A telephone service to answer questions and discuss concerns about children (833-1515)
- School consultation: A service for teachers which focuses on individual children and program issues
- Teacher workshops and classes
- Demonstration Preschool: A daily preschool program for children with special needs in a mainstreamed environment
- Parent-Teacher Resource Center: A collection of child oriented books, materials and resources; a production center for hand made toys and games, and a series of learning opportunities for parents and teachers of young children
- First Years Together: An early intervention service providing developmental follow up for high risk infants and their families through a cooperative effort with area health agencies.

To request any of the above services, call 755-6935, Monday - Friday, 8:00 - 5:00

501 S. Boylan Avenue, Raleigh, N.C. 27603

**Newsletters.** A series of nineteen newsletters is designed to be distributed to parents monthly on their child's adjusted age birthday. Each newsletter describes activities and behaviors of infants and toddlers and discusses issues of concern to their parents.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

First Years Together
Project Enlightenment
501 South Boylan Avenue
Raleigh, North Carolina 27603

ORDERING INFORMATION:

NEWSLETTER SET.....$ 3.00 each
-pad contains 1 copy each of Homecoming to 18 Months

MONTH SET.....$ 3.00 each
-available for each month in pads of 20 copies. Please indicate which month(s) (Homecoming, one, two, etc.) you wish to order.

Postage and Handling: 15% of cost

# BABY TALK

## HOMECOMING ISSUE

### SPECIAL MESSAGE: GOING HOME

Taking your baby home from the hospital after a stay in the intensive care nursery often causes mixed feelings for parents. In one sense, it is nice to be in your own home to take care of your own baby and to rock and coo without an audience. But, it is also very scarey to leave a place where your baby has been taken care of by three shifts of nurses and a doctor who is always on call.

At home it's only you to care for the baby. Many parents wonder and worry about whether they can take good enough care of their baby at home. Your worries are normal. Remember, the doctors would not have sent you home if they felt your baby was not ready.

Some parents like to have their baby sleep in the same room with them; others prefer a separate room. Even parents of full-term, healthy babies check their babies in the middle of the night to see if they are still breathing! If your baby goes home on special equipment, make sure **you** are comfortable with using the equipment **before** you go home.

In the hospital, you have probably received lots of support from the staff and other parents. This can make it hard for you to leave. Everyone at the hospital knew you and knew your baby. At home, friends and relatives are eager to see your baby, but may not understand the worries and anxieties you are feeling. Parents of high-risk infants often ask, "When will I feel more like a parent and less like a nurse?" "When will I ever feel like other parents?" Many parents whose babies have been hospitalized experience these questions and feelings.

Check with your hospital to see if there is a parent support group in your area. Sharing your concerns with other parents who have been through the same experience can sometimes help.

### KNOWING YOUR BABY

Preterm babies are easily overstimulated. One of the differences between premature babies and full-term babies is the ability of full-term babies to deal with several sources of stimulation at once. Common nurturing techniques such as rocking and singing to your baby while maintaining eye contact may be too much for a premature baby. Limited sensory stimulation is sometimes all a premie can handle during early days of recovery.

You can learn how your baby signals you that he or she is overstimulated. Babies use a special body language to communicate. If your baby:

- avoids looking at your directly;
- changes color and becomes pale or flushed;
- changes breathing patterns or hiccoughs or spits up;
- changes muscle tone by becoming limp, floppy, or stiff with extended limbs and fingers;

you may be overstimulating him or her.

Learn to be a keen observer of your baby's cues about overstimulation. When he or she shows signs of being overstimulated, you can help by providing a "time out" from stimulation. Hold your baby quietly. When he or she has a chance to recover, use a quiet voice or calm face and try interacting again. Sometimes swaddling Baby in a blanket or with your hands can help him or her recover from the stress. If your baby is in a crowded or noisy room and shows signs of becoming stressed, move to a quiet place and hold Baby gently until he or she can relax.

By watching your baby, you can tell if he or she is ready for interaction. If Baby has a soft, relaxed facial expression, relaxed body and limbs, or if baby can look at your face, or listen to your voice without any of the stressed behaviors, then he or she is ready to interact.

As your premie grows and matures, he or she will be able to handle more input from you and the environment and will not get overstimulated as easily. It is hard to remember to reduce your interactions when you are so excited and anxious to please your baby.

It is sometimes hard to convince friends and relatives that being easily overstimulated is very common among premies. As Baby matures, he or she will become less easily overstimulated and you can increase your interactions. Follow your premie's lead and interact at his or her rate!

## BABY HOUSEKEEPING

Arrange your household for you and your baby's convenience. If you have a two-story house, keep diapers, clothes, and other baby needs on both levels. Keep burp cloths, extra blankets, pads, kleenex, and a thermos of water or juice for you by your favorite chair so you will not have to get up and down so much. A small drying rack near your changing area is great for hanging receiving blankets, extra pads and damp clothing. This will save extra steps!

This is a good time to streamline household tasks. Put away items that are dust catchers or which require a lot of maintenance. You are going to be too busy giving tender loving care to your baby to worry about cleaning. Fix yourself a clutter box and once a day put all the clutter in the box. Then when you are rested you can put the clutter away.

When friends offer to help, let them! They can drop off or pick up dry cleaning or run errands. They can help fold clothing while you visit. If you have older siblings, let friends take them for a walk or to the park for a while. This gives everyone a break! Your friends will feel good because they were able to help. Remember, you may be able to return the favor some day.

## BABY MEMOS

**SCHEDULE:** I will probably change from the schedule I was on in the hospital. I may sleep differently and eat differently because home is so much quieter than in the hospital nursery. If you are nursing me, I'll probably want to eat more often now that I'm home.

**ENVIRONMENT:** I may need lights on to sleep and some background noise like a radio turned down low. I'm so used to lots of light and noise because of my weeks in the nursery.

**TRUST:** I know this is a hard time for you. It seems that all I do is eat, sleep, cry and mess in my pants. It may be a while before I respond to you with a smile. In the meantime be patient with me and respond to my cries. Crying is how I communicate my needs. When you feed, rock, cuddle, and change me, you are helping me to develop a sense of trust.

## PREMIE NOTES

Premature babies tend to push their shoulders back. By gently curling your baby's shoulders forward, you can help Baby relax which helps feedings to go more smoothly.

## BOOKS ABOUT PREMATURE AND HIGH-RISK INFANTS

**The Premature Baby Book** by Helen Harrison, 1983. St. Martin's Press, New York, New York.

**The Premie Parents' Handbook** by Adrienne Lieberman and Thomas Sheagren, 1984. E.P. Dutton, Inc., New York, New York.

**On Becoming A Family** by T. Berry Brazelton, 1981. Dell Publishing Company, New York, New York.

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Linda Carothers and Val Wilson, EDITORS

# BABY TALK

## WHAT I'M DOING AT ONE MONTH

If your baby was premature this newsletter talks about baby one month from the date due.

### SPECIAL MESSAGE: TIME FOR EACH OTHER

Babies certainly turn a household upside down. This may be especially true in the bedroom! Nearly every couple experiences some sexual stress after having a baby and parents of high risk babies have added stresses. Sex researchers William Masters and Virginia Johnson found that nearly half of the women they interviewed felt low or no interest in sex during the first three months after the baby's birth. Some women experience a decrease in their interest in sex for half a year or longer. Some possible reasons include:

- You may still be recovering physically from hemorrhoids, the episiotomy or other discomforts of childbirth.
- You may be afraid you will become pregnant again.
- Fluctuating hormone levels from the pregnancy and nursing may cause vaginal dryness.
- You may be uncomfortable or physically exhausted from lack of sleep. The never ending job of mothering is sometimes overwhelming.
- You may fear that the baby will awaken and you will be interrupted.

Any and all of these can add up to resentment and frustration for everyone!

**BIRTH CONTROL IS A MUST DURING THIS TIME!** It takes at least a year for a woman's body to physically recover from childbirth. Your family needs and deserves at the very least, a year together before you have another child. Some experts recommend waiting three years. Discuss with your obstetrician the most reliable birth control methods for you and if necessary use two during this first year so your special baby can have his parents' full attention.

Fathers have also gone through some major life style changes and may be feeling jealous and neglected. Dad's body is largely unchanged and he may be feeling deprived of sexual intercourse. He now has to share his wife with a demanding baby. Dad can help meet his own needs by relieving mom of some of the child care responsibilities thus giving welcome relief to the fatigue and exhaustion that plague new mothers.

The sexual aspect of your relationship may not be strong right now, but that does not mean you will never have good sex again. Talking and listening to your partner is the best way to overcome these barriers. Intimacy does not have to end with intercourse if you are not yet ready. When you are ready for sex you may want to use positions that don't cause thrusting against the episiotomy scar such as with the woman on top or with you both side by side. A water soluble lubricating jelly can help add vaginal lubrication.

### PREMIE NOTES

It is important for premies to learn how to bend. While full-term babies spend time in a bent-up position inside the womb, babies who are born early spend their days in a stretched out position on a bed or in an isolette. If a premie had to be on oxygen for any period of time, he or she was positioned so that his or her shoulders were pushed back farther than is normal. To help your baby learn to bend, snuggle him closely when you carry him. Put your arm under his buttocks and bend his knees. Sometimes when you carry him let one leg be bent and one leg be straight. When you change your baby's diaper, raise Baby's hips up with knees bent and gently roll his hips and legs from side to side. If this is hard for baby, keep trying in a gentle way. If your baby is stiff, try bending one leg at a time.

Social interaction with your premie will make her happy and excited. She may after a few minutes of conversation begin to lose control. Her kicking and waving are happy signs, but for a disorganized premie this behavior may lead to a crying spell. If she gets over-excited, help her settle back down by swaddling, quieting and cutting back on your stimulation to her until she relaxes again. You, as her parent, need to help control her excitement for a while.

## BABY MEMOS

**SCHEDULES:** I like being home. I'm still working on regulating my schedule. It may take a while before you are able to count on me to sleep or eat with any regularity.

**HOLDING ON:** I like holding your finger. When you put your finger in my hand, I will grasp it. If you stroke the back of my hand, I will open my fingers.

**COMFORTING MYSELF:** I love to suck. Sucking my fingers or my pacifier gives me great pleasure and comfort. If I like to suck on my hands, but have trouble getting them to my mouth, you can help me by wrapping me in a blanket with my hands close to my mouth.

## CRYING BABIES

It's 6:00 p.m. and supper is almost ready. Dad is home and baby begins to cry. It seems to happen every night. No matter what you do, jostling, rocking, swaddling, feeding, or changing, nothing helps. You are frustrated, exhausted, feeling helpless and at your wit's end. What is wrong?

Pediatricians believe that these periods of crying at the same time every day are a way for a baby to relieve tension. The fussy time may last from one to three hours and may be worse on hectic days. Parents may find that after trying everything else, the best thing for baby is to do nothing. Place baby in the crib and let him or her cry for 10 to 15 minutes. Then go back and try all the comforting techniques again. Parents must assure themselves they have done all they can to help and that baby needs time alone to "let off steam." It is hard to let your baby cry even for a little while without trying to help. Many parents find it helps to do something relaxing themselves while baby is letting off steam. You know baby is safe, so you might take a shower, do exercises, listen to music or read a book for a few minutes. If you can't leave your baby crying in his or her crib, put Baby in the stroller and go for a long walk. Hopefully, after this short break, you will be more relaxed and can comfort and soothe more easily. Keep in mind, if Baby continues to cry, it is not your fault or Baby's fault. Crying is a part of infancy.

## COLIC

If you are wondering if you have a colicky baby you probably don't have one. Colicky babies leave no doubt that they are truly in pain. A colicky baby screams from intense physical discomfort, often drawing his or her legs up, and clenching fists in tension. You may be able to hear Baby's tummy gurgle. Babies have immature digestive systems and this causes more discomfort in some babies than in others. There is no known answer for colic. Colic is very frustrating for parents because it is hard to watch your baby in pain when you are unable to help. The following tips have been found by parents to provide temporary comfort to a colicky baby:

- Apply firm pressure to the abdominal area.
- Hold baby, tummy down, across your lap.
- Place Baby on his back and help bring his or her knees up to his or her tummy.
- Rhythmically bounce your baby while you gently hum.
- Use the warmth of your body against the baby's tummy. Place Baby across your arm or against your chest as you bounce him or her. Press gently on baby's tummy with your hand, palm over navel and fingers encircling baby's abdomen.
- Give your baby a warm bath with a gentle tummy massage.

None of these tips will work all the time. Colic is something that parents must endure and babies must outgrow.

## SOME BOOKS YOU MIGHT ENJOY READING:

**Infants and Mothers** by T. Berry Brazelton, 1983. Dell Publishing, New York, N.R.

**Crying Babies, Sleepless Nights,** by Sandy Jones, 1983. Warner Books, New York, N.Y.

**Babyhood** by Penelope Leach, 1983. Alfred Knopf, New York, N.Y.

**Your Baby: The First Wondrous Year** by Chase, Fisher and Rubin, 1984. Collier Books, New York, N.Y.

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# BABY TALK

## WHAT I'M DOING AT TWO MONTHS

If your baby was premature this newsletter talks about baby two months from the date due.

### SPECIAL MESSAGE: WHEN TO CALL THE DOCTOR

Pediatricians appreciate your worries and concerns about your baby and try to have someone available to answer your questions and handle emergencies. If you have a question or problem, call your doctor's office. Briefly explain your need to the receptionist. If the problem is serious and you need immediate help, say so! Otherwise, she will probably take your name and number, pull your file, and have someone return your call as soon as possible.

The nursery staff at the hospital can usually handle routine questions and concerns. If you are worried about something and the worry won't go away, call. Worry is painful for you and your baby. When you call, have a pad and pencil available to write down instructions. Also have the name and telephone number of your drugstore near the phone.

Mutual consideration between doctor and patient is very important so try and make your telephone calls during your doctor's regular office hours when possible. Pediatricians understand that children do not always get sick between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., and have a system so that they can be reached after hours. Before you call, you may want to write down the baby's symptoms (fever, cough, behavior), and any medications you have given her. If your baby is crying, have someone else hold her, or lie her down in another room while you talk to the doctor so you can both hear. Write down any directions your doctor gives you and make sure you understand the directions before you hang up the phone.

### SIGNS OF ILLNESS

There are no fool-proof clues to indicate when you should call your doctor. Do not hesitate if you are worried that your baby is sick. Call your doctor if your baby develops any of these symptoms.

**Fever:** Any fever signs or fever greater than 100.5 degrees.

**Difficulty breathing.** If your baby appears to be working to breathe, tugging when he breathes, or turning blue (more than usual) your doctor needs to see Baby.

**Dehydration.** A baby with vomiting and diarrhea can easily become dehydrated. If your baby has diarrhea or vomiting and has not urinated in a while, or if he or she has a dry appearing mouth, call your doctor.

**Listlessness or a change in behavior** whether or not there is a fever. Your baby not "acting like himself" is a good indication that you need to check with the doctor.

If, by chance, you have to go to the Emergency Room with your baby, always have the Emergency Room call your pediatrician or the pediatrician or neonatologist on call. Your special baby needs a doctor who is familiar with babies!

### PREMIE NOTE:

Many premies will seem to roll early. They can accomplish this by using their feet to push off from the side of the crib. They roll their body all in one piece - like a log roll. Gently encourage baby to roll one body part at a time: hip, shoulder, head, shoulder, hip.

## SAFETY

You can save money if you buy or borrow a used crib and other baby equipment. Check carefully to make sure all the baby equipment is safe:

Wash everything before using it.

Check wooden objects for chipping paint. Only objects painted with **unleaded** paint are safe for baby.

Put a seat strap on a high chair or infant seat that does not have one. You can make one using a strong belt.

For Baby's safety the crib mattress must fit snugly against the sides of the crib. Crib slats should be no more than 2⅜" apart. Use a securely fastened bumper paid in the crib to prevent your baby from getting his or her head caught in the rails.

There should not be bolts or rough metal parts that baby can reach on any equipment.

If you use a playpen the mesh netting should be smaller than a button from baby's clothing so the baby won't get caught in the net. If it has slatted sides, the slats should be no more than 2⅜" apart.

## Baby Memos

**TIME OUT:** Time between my feedings should be lengthening. This allows you a little more freedom. Leave me with a sitter or with grandmother or grandfather and treat yourself to a few hours away. You deserve a break every now and then.

**MYSELF:** By now you've discovered that I won't break, even though I still seem so tiny! I now respond to your voice and enjoy being in the middle of family activities. I spend a great deal of time "studying" my hands, trying to discover what is a part of me and what is not.

**SOUNDS:** I like to make sounds. I think it's fun just to listen to myself coo. Sometimes I like just to coo to myself and other times I enjoy having a "conversation" with you. Pretend you understand what I'm saying and respond to me. I'll love this game!

**HANDS:** If you stroke the back of my hand, I will open my fist.

## BOOKS ABOUT PREMATURE AND HIGH-RISK INFANTS

**The Premature Baby Book** by Helen Harrison, 1983. St. Martin's Press, New York, New York.

**Your Premature Baby** by Robin Marantz, 1983. Ramson Associates, New York, New York.

**Premature Babies: A Handbook for Parents** by Sherri Nance, 1982. Arbor House: New York.

**Born Early: The Story of a Premature Baby** by Mary Ellen Avery and Georgia Litwack, 1983. Little Brown and Company, Boston, MA.

**The Premie Parents' Handbook** by Adrienne Lieberman and Thomas Sheagren, 1984. E.P. Dutton, Inc., New York, New York.

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# BABY TALK

## SETTLING INTO A ROUTINE AT THREE MONTHS

If your baby was premature this newsletter talks about baby three months from the date due.

### SPECIAL MESSAGE: WHERE DOES THE TIME GO?

Now that you and your baby have been home from the hospital for a while, you may be wondering, "Why can't I get enough done?" Executives of giant companies and moms of tiny babies can use the same trick to get more done each day.

Each day make a list in writing of what you want to accomplish. Be realistic. Try not to make the list too long or too hard. As you finish an item on the list, cross it off and give yourself a small reward like propping up your feet, calling a friend, or having a healthy snack. You will be able to see how much you have accomplished as your list gets smaller.

Remember, babies, especially high-risk babies, are demanding and require large blocks of time. Their needs come before household chores. It would require super-human strength and energy to keep a perfect house, prepare gourmet meals, and give your baby the very best care. Organizing your time can help, but households are never the same after the birth of a child. Lower your housekeeping standards by at least two notches! Children never remember if you had a clean bathroom, but they do remember if you spend time with them!

### SAFETY

Most everything baby touches or holds will go into the mouth. This is your baby's way of exploring and discovering so make sure the things you give baby to explore are safe. Objects should be at least three inches long so that baby can't choke. Check all toys for pieces that might come off. Be sure to check stuffed animals carefully for stuffing that leaks from seams and eyes that pull off easily.

### IS MY BABY SPOILED?

It is impossible to spoil a baby. Babies communicate by crying. "Responding to a crying baby results in a more contented baby who will cry less after six months of age", according to Marilyn Segal, Ph.D., Director of the Family Center at Nova University. If your baby stops crying when you pick him or her up, you are not encouraging baby to get attention; you are just helping baby feel secure.

### BABY MEMOS:

**HANDS:** I like to watch and move my hands. They are fun to watch even when I'm not holding a toy. I enjoy watching my hands when I am lying on my tummy or back. Placing me on my side with a pillow behind me helps me get and keep my hands together which is even more fun. Encourage me to notice my hands more by putting a wristband or a colorful sticker on my hands. Don't leave me alone with a sticker. I might eat it! Another way to help me notice my hands is to shine the light from a flashlight on my hands.

**SOCIAL HOUR:** I'm becoming much more of a social creature these days. I enjoy being "talked to" and can respond with many different sounds. I may even "squeal" with delight at my newly discovered sounds.

**NAPPING:** My nap schedule may be a little more predictable which gives you some time to relax or get some things done.

**TIME OUT:** I need my quiet times as well as playing times. When I'm tired or overstimulated I may look away, withdraw, or go to sleep. I need time to relax but I will be ready to play later.

### PREMIE NOTES

Infant seats are great for short periods of time but constant or prolonged use of the infant seat may keep your baby from learning to develop and control neck and back muscles. Premies can do a better job of developing these muscles when they are placed on the floor on their tummy, back, and side.

# THIS MONTH WITH BABY*

## MOVING

**I like to:**

hold my chest up and head erect for about 10 seconds. I may lift my head for many minutes.

sit while you support me with your hands. I may be able to help maintain my sitting position.

hold my hands open most of the time. My reflex grasp is fading.

**I have fun when you:**

position safe pictures and toys in my crib so I must raise my head to look at them.

place a rolled towel under my arms as I lie on my tummy. This helps me to enjoy this position.

hold me in a sitting position in your lap or between your legs on the floor. A moving toy at eye level may encourage me to practice sitting longer.

stroke the back of my hand. It helps me relax and open my hand.

## THINKING

**I like to:**

follow a slowly moving object with my eyes.

view my fingers individually instead of just looking at my fist.

show you I have some memory (just a little right now).

**I have fun when you:**

position me on my side with my hands in front, or in a supported sitting position. This encourages my hands to be at midline and encourages me to get them to eye level.

talk to me about what is going to happen: "It's time for you to eat". I will learn to associate food with a bottle or a certain position with eating.

## PLAYING

**I like to:**

smile when we play.

gurgle and coo in response to sounds.

giggle when you tickle my stomach or feet.

**I have fun when you:**

spend some time each day talking, repeating my sounds and appreciating my smiles.

understand when I am tired.

play vocal games with me. Sing, make funny noises, coo, and talk while you change my diaper or feed me. Pause and listen to see if I make any noises.

place small rattles or toys in my hands. I can hold them for a short period.

## COMMUNICATING

**I like to:**

try to see where a sound comes from by turning my head and neck.

distinguish voices from other sounds.

stop sucking to listen.

**I have fun when you:**

entertain me by clicking your tongue, snapping your fingers or humming.

talk to me. Your voice is my favorite sound!

sing songs to me.

play music for me.

turn on my musical mobile so I can listen to the sounds.

*Adjusted Age — If your baby was premature this newsletter talks about baby three months from the date due. Please do not regard this chart as a rigid time table. Some babies perform an activity earlier or later.

BABY TALK is a series of newsletters for parents of high-risk infants birth through eighteen months. These newsletters were developed by First Years Together through a grant from Handicapped Children's Early Education Program, U.S. Office of Special Education to Project Enlightenment, Wake County Public School System, 501 S. Boylan Ave., Raleigh, N.C. 27603. For additional information, write or call (919) 755-6935.

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Linda Carothers and Val Wilson, EDITORS

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# BABY TALK

## LOOKING AT MY WORLD AT FOUR MONTHS

If your baby was premature this newsletter talks about baby four months from the date due.

### SPECIAL MESSAGE: MOTHERS NEED TIME OUT!

Your beautiful baby is now four months old. The two of you have spent many hours together and sometimes it may seem as if your baby will be an infant forever. By four months, it is important for you to have some time to devote to yourself alone. It is good for you and your baby to have a little time away from each other.

Moms can fall into the "stay-at-home" trap when they believe that it is impossible to do anything with a small baby at home. They stay home, feel tired, do less, watch T.V., nap, and sleep late. Don't fall into this trap! Put Baby in a stroller or backpack and walk briskly around the neighborhood. If you walk fast enough to make breathing a little harder than normal, you will improve your figure and strengthen your heart.

Find someone you trust to watch your baby, even if only long enough for you to enjoy a long bath. Ask the baby's dad to take care of Baby while you take a few hours to pamper yourself. The rewards will pay off for everyone.

### SAFETY

**FALLS:** Now that baby is beginning to roll over, he is in much greater danger of falling. If baby is lying on a changing table, sofa or bed, keep your hand on him at all times. Don't turn your back. If you must be interrupted, put Baby in his crib or on a blanket on the floor.

**CAR SAFETY:** The law in North Carolina and most other states requires children under three to be buckled into an approved car seat while riding in a car. Baby is not safe from injury if he is in your arms. If you don't have a safety-approved car seat, you can rent one for a small fee. Call your local health department for information.

**ELECTRICAL OUTLETS:** When baby starts rolling, it is time to make sure electrical outlets are covered. Babies like to poke and they find outlets fascinating. Wet hands make great conductors for electricity. Plastic outlet covers are inexpensive and they work very well. Cover all outlets that are not in use to prevent your baby from getting an electrical shock. Also be sure to secure electrical cords so that appliances can't be pulled off high surfaces onto Baby.

**ACCIDENTS** are the leading cause of death in children. Keep your precious baby safe.

### BABY MEMOS

**LEARNING TO SIT:** When I lie on my back and play with my feet, I'm actually practicing sitting! I'm exercising the muscles in my legs, back, and stomach that I will use when I sit up.

**"TALKING":** There are so many interesting things around me and I want to tell you all about them. I love to "talk" just as loud as I can. Actually, most of the sounds I make just happen according to the shape of my mouth at the time, and they usually surprise me just as much as they do you. I like to talk and hear music and I enjoy activity. But I also need time when everything is quiet and there is no TV or radio or noise so that I can concentrate just on you and your voice.

**DISCOVERING MY HANDS:** As I discover my hands and begin to bring them together, I grasp one hand with the other and feel the squeeze. This feeling tells me that my hand is part of me and this discovery is very exciting. I will spend hours exploring my hands and trying to discover what is me and what is not me.

### PUNISHMENT — FORGET IT!

It is important for a child to obey his parents, but a four month old does not understand punishment. Even if babies this age did understand, they cannot control their actions enough to do what you tell them. At four months of age, punishment of any kind will only hold back development. Being kind and gentle with your baby will help more than anything else. If your baby is doing something that you need to stop, distract him or her by showing a toy or helping him or her look in a mirror.

### PREMIE NOTES

Sometimes premies insist on trying to stand. Ideally your baby should master sitting before standing. Learning to sit and crawl uses bending muscles, while standing uses stretching muscles. Premature babies who have been hospitalized have already spent a lot of time in "stretched-out" positions. They now need to concentrate on bending exercises.

As parents, we sometimes like to see our babies stand because it looks like, "She's so strong," or "She's doing this so early." But bending is what your baby needs.

You can help your baby's physical development by encouraging him or her to bend and sit. Walkers, which encourage babies to stand, aren't good for premies. Use a walker as little as possible until your baby's feet can be flat on the floor with bent legs.

# THIS MONTH WITH BABY*

## MOVING

**I like to:**

kick my feet.

lie on my tummy and raise my head.

hold my head up and turn in all directions.

roll from side to side and from my stomach to my back.

try to reach for objects.

sit for a short time while you support my back.

**I have fun when you:**

put bells on my booties and faces on my socks. When I kick I can hear and see them.

string elastic or yarn across my crib near my feet so that I can kick.

show me toys and other objects so I can practice reaching. I especially like to reach for a big, round ring like a bangle bracelet.

help me to sit by supporting my back with your body or propping me in the corner of my crib.

## THINKING

**I like to:**

follow moving objects with my eyes.

look for sounds.

play with my hands.

**I have fun when you:**

take me for walks. I like to go to the store, ride in my backpack, ride in my stroller. I can see and hear many things and also be close to you.

give me rattles, spoons, and things to hold so I can practice banging and dropping.

gently squirt water from a liquid detergent bottle on my arms, legs, and chest while I am taking a bath.

## PLAYING

**I like to:**

laugh.

look at myself in the mirror.

look at faces.

hear your voice rather than that of a stranger.

hear music. It makes me quiet.

**I have fun when you:**

play music for me. I like to listen to the radio.

dance with me, sometimes fast and sometimes slow.

take me with you as you move through the house. I like to be where you are.

show me myself in the mirror. Give me a small mirror or hang a mirror in my crib.

## COMMUNICATING

**I like to:**

make funny noises.

listen to you talk and sing.

watch you.

try to make different sounds.

**I have fun when you:**

sing and talk to me. Even though I can't talk yet, listening to you will help me learn.

tell me what you're doing so I can hear lots of different words.

imitate my sounds.

sing me lots of songs and tell me nursery rhymes.

*Adjusted age — If your baby was premature, this newsletter talks about Baby 4 months from the date due. Please do not regard this chart as a rigid time table. Some babies perform an activity earlier or later.

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Linda Carothers and Val Wilson, EDITORS

# BABY TALK

## IT'S A WIDE, WIDE WORLD AT FIVE MONTHS

If your baby was premature this newsletter talks about baby five months from the date due.

### SPECIAL MESSAGE: WILL MY BABY BE ALL RIGHT?

Brace yourself! For most babies, the fifth month is the first phase of a speed-up of activity and growth that will leave you breathless. This activity spurt raises lots of questions in parents' minds.

Every parent wonders if their baby is normal and growing and developing as a baby should. Parents of babies who were hospitalized and had such a rough start worry even more. Will my baby remember the hospital? Will my baby be O.K.? Will my baby ever catch up? Am I spoiling my baby? Will my baby ever sleep all night?

All parents have these questions. Taking care of a baby is a big job and parents often worry and find making decisions about baby care difficult. These feelings and worries are normal. Everyone has them. It helps to talk to your spouse, with friends or with other parents whose babies have been hospitalized about your questions and concerns and especially your feelings. Don't keep your feelings and worries inside. Talk to someone! Call a friend or a professional who can help you.

### SAFETY

Your baby is moving around and exploring more and more every day. Baby is using all his or her senses to explore the world. Safety is a major concern now. Below is a list of suggestions to make your home safer for Baby.

Fence all stairways, top and bottom.

Baby-proof all rooms by removing matches, cigarette butts, and any other small, breakable or sharp objects. Secure tables or lamps that can be pulled over.

Keep highchairs, playpens, and infant seats away from the stove, work counters, radiators, and furnaces.

Keep all electric cords out of reach.

Don't paint any toy, crib furniture, or woodwork Baby might chew with lead-containing paint.

If your house was originally built before 1940 and has any chipping paint or plaster, repair the area completely and cover it with wallpaper or safe paint.

### DISCIPLINE

Baby is now reaching and wants to grab and explore everything. At 5 months, Baby is too young to remember not to touch or reach for certain things. It is better to move out of reach anything and everything that is not safe or that you don't want baby to explore. Babies can learn "no" at 5 months but they can't remember what objects are "no-no." When you tell a 5 month old "no", you just discourage your baby from exploring, and your baby will miss lots of important learning experiences.

If your baby has something you don't want him to have, offer to trade for another similar safe object or distract him with a look in the mirror or another game.

### BABY MEMOS

**STRANGER ANXIETY:** Now is the time I know my family and close friends so well that I may be shy with strangers. I may try to hide on your shoulder or I may even cry when I see people I don't know or don't see very often.

Let me study them while you hold me. When I'm comfortable I will smile and talk to them. It will help if you tell people to just give me time before they play with me. If I don't see Grandma and Granddad very often I might think they are "strangers" and cry. If they give me time to look and become familiar with them, I will let them hold me.

**TOUCH:** Before my bath, place me naked on my stomach. Gently rub my back, arms, and legs. Stroke me with a towel so I can feel roughness. Then stroke me with a stuffed toy so I can feel softness. Talk to me about what I am feeling. If you touch me too lightly, it tickles. Touch me with your whole hand more firmly and it won't tickle so much.

**MOUTHING:** I love to put things in my mouth. Everything I hold goes to my mouth. This does not encourage bad habits like thumb-sucking later. This is just my way to learn about things. Make sure the objects I hold are safe and won't hurt me if I put them in my mouth.

### PREMIE NOTES

When your pediatrician recommends starting solid foods, your baby may reject new tastes or textures. It is important to keep trying. Babies need practice chewing, moving food around in their mouth, and swallowing. They are learning to use muscles they will later use to talk.

# THIS MONTH WITH BABY*

## MOVING

**I like to:**

roll from my back to my stomach

touch, hold, turn, shake, mouth, and taste objects

play with a rattle you hand me.

reach for objects with one or both hands.

sit alone for a few seconds.

kick and try to play with my feet.

switch toys from one hand to another.

**I have fun when you:**

let me be barefoot so I can play with my toes.

put me on my stomach so I can practice rolling and pushing myself up with my hands.

give me lots of safe things to hold and touch and shake and taste.

help me do sit-ups by pulling me up by my hands. I can now help pull myself up.

## PLAYING

**I like to:**

smile or talk to you to gain your attention and get you to play.

smile at human faces and voices.

make faces at you and imitate your faces.

recognize myself in the mirror.

play games with you and laugh.

know you so well that I'm shy with strangers.

**I have fun when you:**

play with me in the mirror and imitate the faces I make.

give me a non-breakable mirror to play with. I like to look at my face even when we aren't playing together.

play peek-a-boo with me. Cover your head with a blanket and ask me to find you. Cover my head and watch what I do.

## THINKING

**I like to:**

be awake and alert for almost two hours at a time.

use my eyes to look for fast moving objects.

look around in new situations.

lean over to look for something that has fallen.

bang things.

explore my world as well as myself.

recognize a favorite toy if it is partly covered.

**I have fun when you:**

take me for walks so that I can look at lots of new things.

make a paper hat for me to wear. I can take it off and crinkle it up. Don't let me eat the paper!

play "peek-a-boo" games by hiding a toy halfway under a blanket.

give me safe household objects to play with like butter tubs, clean sponges, measuring spoons, scarves, and washcloths.

## COMMUNICATING

**I like to:**

vocalize and try to get your attention.

stop vocalizing or crying when you begin talking.

look at the person who is talking.

**I have fun when you:**

answer me when I talk to get your attention. This will help me learn to make sounds instead of crying.

tell me what you are doing. I like to hear you talk and am learning while I listen.

sing songs to me and tell me nursery rhymes.

* ADJUSTED AGE — If your baby was premature this newsletter talks about baby five months from the date due. Please do not regard this chart as a rigid time table. Some babies perform an activity earlier or later.

## SOME BOOKS YOU MIGHT FIND HELPFUL:


Brazelton, B. 1969 **Infants and Mothers.** Dell Publishing Company.

Harrison, H. 1983. **Your Premature Baby.** St. Martins Press.

Johnson and Johnson. **Your Baby: The First Wondrous Year.** MacMillan Publishing Company.

Jones, S. **Crying Babies, Sleepless Nights.** Warner Books.

Leach, P. **Babyhood.** Alfred A. Knopf.



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Linda Carothers and Val Wilson, EDITORS

# BABY TALK

## MAKING THINGS HAPPEN AT SIX MONTHS

If your baby was premature this newsletter talks about baby six months from the date due.

### SPECIAL MESSAGE: DADS ARE SPECIAL

Now that your baby is six months old, you probably feel like you know each other pretty well. How well does Baby's daddy know him or her? Daddy is a very important person in your baby's life.

Does Daddy help with Baby's care? If he does not, or if he seems slow and clumsy when he does try to help, it's not that he doesn't care. As you know, it takes time and experience to feel comfortable taking care of your little one. Daddy may be afraid of doing something wrong, or hurting the baby. He may feel too silly to ask questions.

Be patient with Daddy's learning and encourage him to help change, bathe, or feed Baby. Share tips you have learned and show him what Baby likes. As Dad learns the joy of caring for his little one, he will be more willing to help.

Remember, it's not the big things like going to a ball game or the circus that form the bonds of love between parents and children. It's the little things, done every day in a caring manner, that help love to grow.

### NEW TEETH

By six months many babies have begun to cut their bottom teeth. Teething really does hurt, and often it will cause your baby to be fussy and have diarrhea or a fever. You can help soothe your baby's gums by giving him a teether to chew. Some teethers have a liquid center and can be chilled in the refrigerator. The coldness will numb his sore little gums. If you do not have a teether, use a chilled metal spoon or washcloth.

Now is also the time to plan for your baby's good dental health. If you give your baby a bottle of juice or milk at bedtime, the sugar in the liquid stays on his front teeth all night long. This causes cavities in the front teeth of even very small babies. If Baby wants to suck on something before sleeping, give him a pacifier, or a clean nipple from his bottle. You can clean Baby's new teeth by wiping them with a clean cloth.

### WHAT IS "AVERAGE"

Sometimes you will hear statements like "the average baby smiles at self in the mirror at five and one-half months." If you baby does it earlier you may decide Baby is very smart; if Baby does it later, you may worry that Baby is slow. Neither is true. There is no such thing as an "average baby." "He" is an imaginary baby who develops faster than half of all children his age and slower than the other half.

Development is not like a grade in school that is passed or failed. Development is like taking a trip. Some people take the airplane and get there fast; others go by car which is slower, but more economical. Some choose the expressway; others go the scenic route. How they got there is not important as long as they got there.

If you have concerns about your baby's development, please call your pediatrician.

### BABY MEMOS

**CAUSE AND EFFECT:** I can make things happen! I am learning that I can change the world. When I pull the string on a music box, it will play a tune for me. At first I may not realize the connection between pulling the string and the music. I pulled the string only because it was fun to reach and grab. But then I noticed that the music always followed when I pulled the string. I learned "I can make it happen!" This is called cause and effect learning.

**TOYS:** Now is a good time to give me toys that react when I do something. At first, I may only "make it work" by accident, but soon I will learn the connection between what I do and what the toy does. Some toys and games I might like are a ball with bells inside that I can roll, a toy that squeaks when I pat it, a tower of paper cups that you build and I can knock down.

**BOUNCE:** I like to play bouncing games. Sit me on your lap and while you bounce me, sing "Ride the horsey through the town, through the town, through the town, my fair baby." Really laugh and bounce me extra hard on the "baby" word. Soon I will anticipate the end and laugh and laugh.

### PREMIE NOTES

It takes extra practice for premies to sit steadily enough to use their hands for play. You may need to help steady your baby by propping him with pillows or blankets. If he is unsteady he may be able to use only one hand, rather than both hands to reach for or hold toys. Just think, when you start to fall, you reach out a hand to catch yourself. Baby does this too if he or she is unsteady in sitting.

# THIS MONTH WITH BABY*

## MOVING

**I like to:**

suck my toes.

roll from my back to my stomach.

sit up alone for several minutes at a time though I may slump forward for balance.

creep or scoot on my tummy to get around. I may go forward or backward, but I really want to go.

try to get off my tummy using my hands and knees. I may try to move by rocking, and land on my nose.

reach with one arm.

**I have fun when you:**

put bells or faces on my booties so I can play with my feet.

let me go barefoot so I can play with my toes.

play "This little piggy went to market . . ."

put me on the floor on my stomach so I can practice getting on my hands and knees.

get down on the floor on your hands and knees and play with me.

## PLAYING

**I like to:**

smile at myself in a mirror.

make faces like you do.

look for you when you say my name.

have time to warm up to new people. Give me time and I will let them play or talk to me.

**I have fun when you:**

look in a mirror with me.

play "peek-a-boo," "pat-a-cake," and other talking and laughing games.

rock and sing to me. I don't care if you can't carry a tune!

talk to me as you work and describe what you are doing. "I'm going to change your diaper," or "I'm going to wash the dishes."

## THINKING

**I like to:**

make things happen like pulling a string to ring a bell.

look at familiar things in new ways, like turning toys upside down.

study small details like beads that move, or each key on a ring.

explore the ideas of "inside" and "under." What is inside the cup? What is under my blanket?

**I have fun when you:**

give me toys that do something when I do something, like a ball with chimes in it that I can push.

give me objects to push or kick, like a beach ball or empty cardboard box.

help me to sit steadily so I can use both hands to explore my world. You can prop me up with pillows or blankets.

## COMMUNICATING

**I like to:**

babble and say some syllables. Sometimes they will be sounds you recognize like "da" but mostly I'm playing with new sounds.

hear different voices. I can recognize different voices and will look for people I know.

belly laugh. I will chuckle a lot when you play with me.

tell you by my sounds when I am comfortable, happy, uncomfortable, or upset.

**I have fun when you:**

imitate sounds that I make. I will soon learn to imitate you.

play games with me that help me laugh and giggle like "tickle" and "pat-a-cake."

sing songs to me and tell me nursery rhymes. The rhymes will help me learn to talk.

have "conversations" with me. Answer me when I make my sounds.

respond to my sounds and noises when I call or need you. I will then begin to use my sounds rather than crying.

* Adjusted age — If your baby was premature this newsletter talks about baby six months from the date due. Please do not regard this chart as a rigid time table. Some babies perform an activity earlier or later.

## SOME MATERIALS YOU MIGHT FIND HELPFUL


American Guidance. 1979. **Small Wonder Kit 1.** American Guidance Service.

Beebe, B. 1981. **Best Bets for Babies.** Dell Publishing Co.

Brazelton, T.B. 1976. **Doctor and Child.** Sell Publishing Co.



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Linda Carothers and Val Wilson, EDITORS

# BABY TALK

## GETTING AROUND AT SEVEN MONTHS

If your baby was premature this newsletter talks about baby seven months from the date due.

### SPECIAL MESSAGE: LEARNING TO DISCIPLINE

As you look at this bundle of energy that is getting into everything and trying to soak up the whole world at once, do you ask yourself, "Is this the same tiny bundle I brought home from the hospital?" Your baby has grown in many ways. He or she can now go wherever curiosity leads. It is now time for you to make some important decisions about discipline. Discipline means to guide, instruct or teach. Or you can use discipline just to keep Baby out of your hair.

For example, suppose Baby reaches for your coffee. You have a choice. You can teach Baby by saying, "No. This cup is hot. Here, you have your cup," or you can punish Baby by slapping his hand. Both will stop the baby from getting the cup. The first way helps Baby learn and encourages Baby to cooperate and play safely. The slap discourages Baby from exploring and says, "Don't be curious." Baby may quickly learn "no-no," by a slap, but Baby won't remember about any other cup or object. There is no carry-over.

Research shows us that discipline which teaches cooperation and guides behavior is more effective in the long run and helps children develop self-control. Physical force works in the short run but does not help children learn to control themselves.

Your baby is a person; a little person who loves you and wants to please you. The more you use discipline to guide and teach the more you will provide the experience Baby needs to learn to cooperate.

Think about how you want to discipline. Ask yourself: "Do I want to discipline to help Baby learn or to get my own way?"

### SAFETY

Choking is one of the most frequent causes of accidents to children under one year. Babies this age explore the world with their mouths. We must be extra careful about small objects including food that go into Baby's mouth. All foods offered to Baby should be cut into small bite-size pieces. It is better to cut food such as bananas, hot dogs, and chicken sticks into oblong pieces. Watch closely that teething biscuits and crackers given to Baby do not lodge in his or her throat. Baby should never be left alone when he or she is eating any type of food.

### DISCIPLINE

Baby is developing a real sense of humor and sometimes likes to tease. Making requests into a game can help Baby learn to cooperate. For example, if you want to wash your baby's face and Baby resists, try tapping on a mirror and getting your baby to watch the baby's face in the mirror getting washed, too. If a mirror isn't available, turn face washing into a peek-a-boo game.

Put objects that you don't want Baby to play with out of reach. As Baby gets more mobile, you will have to put away more objects.

Limit your "no's" to only a few important safety rules, such as touching light sockets and playing with chokable objects. If you save "no" and only use it occasionally for the same rules, then Baby is more likely to respond and cooperate. If Baby hears "no" often, he quickly tunes out the word "no" and ignores it.

### BABY MEMOS

**FINGER FOOD:** When I can hold things and push them into my mouth, I am probably ready for finger foods. Put a slice of banana on my high chair and let me pick it up and taste it. I may want to squish it between my fingers. I am learning how food feels and tastes.

**THROWING:** I am learning to use my thumb and fingers to pick up objects. I am also learning to let go. I first learn this by straightening my arm and then all my fingers (throwing)! I watch where the object goes and listen for the sound of it landing. I learn that objects make different sounds when they land. I am not being "bad" when I throw things; I am learning about my world and about cause and effect. When I throw my spoon, then Mommy picks it up! Play these "games" with me. When you get tired, tie the objects to my high chair so you won't have to bend so far. Soon I will learn to retrieve them by pulling the string.

### PREMIE NOTES

It is important for babies to crawl before they walk. Many premies try to by-pass crawling because bending, which is a part of crawling, is so hard for them. Stretching is easier, so many premies try to walk or stand whenever they can. Crawling, however, helps all babies learn the balance they need for walking and also exercises the muscles babies use to walk correctly. Sometimes premies need encouragement to crawl and play on their stomachs. Encourage your premie to crawl by getting on the floor, too.

# THIS MONTH WITH BABY*

## MOVING

**I like to:**

sit with good balance for several minutes. My hands are free to play with toys.

hold a toy in each hand.

move on my hands and knees. I might still creep a lot on my stomach or roll to get around.

use my thumbs separately from my fingers to pick up my toys.

**I have fun when you:**

put a basket or small box of toys where I can reach them. I love to take them out and play with them. I like to hold a toy in each hand.

put me on the floor so I can practice getting on my hands and knees. Put out interesting things for me to reach.

get down on the floor and crawl with me.

give me a variety of objects to hold, such as pots and pans, balls, blocks, large spoons, measuring cups, and plastic toys.

let me try drinking from a cup.

## PLAYING

**I like to:**

reach and pat my reflection in the mirror.

explore your body with my mouth and hands.

show humor and tease you.

resist you, if you make me do something I don't want to do!

**I have fun when you:**

play peek-a-boo with me. Sometimes let me be the one who hides and then laugh when I come out.

read simple books to me. Show me the pictures. This is a nice time to snuggle.

make faces with me in a mirror. Give me a safe mirror of my own.

take me on walks where there are people to watch and interesting things to see.

## THINKING

**I like to:**

look for toys that are hidden.

imitate a simple act like clapping.

try to feed myself.

see or hear something that I remember, especially familiar songs and games.

**I have fun when you:**

hide a toy I like under a cloth or cup. I will try and find it. You may have to show me at first.

show me how to clap, wave bye-bye, blow a kiss, brush my hair. Ask me to do it and laugh when I'm successful and I will want to imitate more.

sing and play familiar songs and games with me. I love the ones I recognize.

## COMMUNICATING

**I like to:**

babble. I am making more and more sounds.

say several sounds in one breath.

watch people when they talk.

**I have fun when you:**

record our voices on a tape-recorder and let me listen.

name objects in my world. "This is a ball. This is a bottle. This is a tree."

look at me when you talk. Have a special time when you and I are close and talk to me about our day. I want to watch your face.

## Some Books You Might Find Helpful:


Ferber, R. 1985. **Solve Your Child's Sleep Problems.** Simon and Schuster.

Growing Child Editors. 1983. **Growing Parent: A Sourcebook for Families.** Contemporary Books

Hagstrom and Morrill. 1977. **Games Babies Play and More Games Babies Play.** Pocket Books.

Parke, R. 1981. **Fathers.** Harvard Union Press.

Prudden, S. 1983. **Exercise Program for Young Children.** Workman Publishing Company.


*Adjusted age — If your baby was premature this newsletter talks about baby seven months from date due. Please do not regard this chart as a rigid time table. Some babies perform an activity earlier or later.


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Linda Carothers and Val Wilson, EDITORS

# BABY TALK

## CLOSE BY MOM'S SIDE AT EIGHT MONTHS

If your baby was premature this newsletter talks about baby eight months from the date due.

### SPECIAL MESSAGE: HOW OLD IS YOUR PREMATURE BABY?

Parents are continually watchful of their baby's growth and development. This is especially true for parents whose children were born early. Premature babies may not look or act the same as babies who were born on or close to their due date. Parents of premies sometimes wonder, "Is my baby slow? Will my baby catch up?" It is normal for parents of premature babies to have these concerns.

Research shows us that babies who are hospitalized at birth have a different timetable of development. There are two ways to think about your baby's age if he or she was born prematurely. **Chronological Age** is the number of months since your baby's birth date. **Adjusted Age** is the number of months since your baby's due date. Adjusted Age takes into consideration the time your baby missed to grow and develop in the womb. A baby who is born two months early missed out on two months of growth and development in the womb. He or she isn't expected to do all the same things at the same time as a baby who was born right on the due date. Premature babies need a little extra time to catch up.

No baby, premature or full term, follows a perfect time table for growth and development. All babies perform activities like rolling over and sitting up at their own speed.

Instead of worrying that your baby does things later than other babies with the same chronological age, relax and enjoy his or her accomplishments as they occur.

### SAFETY

Your baby is becoming more interested in the world. Toys are a wonderful way for Baby to explore and learn, but please make sure they are safe. Check all toys for small pieces that Baby could remove and swallow. Before you give your baby a toy think, "If this breaks, could it hurt my baby?" Avoid long strings or cords that could wrap around your child's neck and cause choking or strangulation. Check old toys regularly for loose parts or broken stitches that might allow the stuffing to come out. Kitchen and other household items may be used as toys for Baby. Just remember, they too should be checked for safety.

### DISCIPLINE

Because babies are curious and want to know how everything works, they often get into things that aren't safe. They certainly don't mean to be bad. When your baby wants to explore something that isn't safe—like a hot stove—give her something else to play with like a pot with a spoon for stirring. Offer Baby a similar alternative to what they are exploring rather than just telling them "no." You might say, "The pot on the stove is hot, here is one you can play with," and show Baby how to stir. This will help your baby learn to cooperate.

### GOOD BOOKS TO READ WITH BABIES:

**Egg in the Hole** by Richard Scary
**Pat the Bunny** by D. Kunhardt
**Pat the Cat** by E. Kunhardt

### BABY MEMOS

**IMITATING:** I will learn to imitate you if you imitate my movements first. I like to imitate head nods, twisting, raising arms, clapping hands, and waving.

**SOLID FOODS:** I sometimes do not like the texture or the way some foods feel in my mouth. Experiment with foods of different textures to find ones that I might like. I need the experience of solid foods so I can learn to move foods with my tongue. If I continue to have difficulty accepting solid foods, please mention this to your pediatrician.

**SITTING:** Sitting on the floor helps me learn balance. Even when I fall over, I am learning how to stretch out my arms and "catch" myself. If I am in a walker, I won't get a chance to practice protecting myself.

### SOME BOOKS YOU MIGHT FIND HELPFUL:


Avery, M. 1983. **The Story of a Premature Baby.** Little Brown and Co.
Burtt, K. 1981. **Smart Toys for Babies from Birth to Two.** Harper Colophon.
Evan and Lifield. 1982. **Good Beginnings: Parenting in the Early Years.** High Scope Press.
Goldberg, S. 1983. **Born Too Soon.** W.H. Freeman and Co.
Kaban B. 1984. **Choosing Toys for Children.** Collier Books.

# THIS MONTH WITH BABY*

## MOVING

**I like to:**

move my legs in a crawling motion and lift my stomach off the floor.

turn or spin on my stomach.

try and get to a sitting position by myself. I may need help.

bounce while I sit.

pick up some small objects.

**I have fun when you:**

give me lots of time on the floor to practice crawling and getting into a sitting position. I like for you to get on the floor with me.

let me practice using my cup, even though it may be messy.

wiggle a shoe lace, pony tail yarn, or strip of cloth on a table top. Show me how to pick it up by pinching the thin material between my thumb and finger.

## PLAYING

**I like to:**

pat, smile, or try to kiss my mirror image.

be close to Mom. I am afraid of strangers or separation from Mom.

push away things I don't want.

shout for attention.

**I have fun when you:**

play tug-of-war with me. I like to win sometimes.

call my name from another room to remind me you are there.

put your head around the door every once in a while so I can see you and know you are close.

## THINKING

**I like to:**

watch my hands as I move them.

drop objects into a container. I am trying to understand "in" and "out."

**I have fun when you:**

give me a wide-mouthed container and wooden clothes-pins or blocks so I can practice "in" and "out."

wrap a toy in a blanket while I watch, then let me unwrap it.

## COMMUNICATING

**I like to:**

babble with a variety of sounds and inflections. I will make a series of sounds that sound like the tone of your voice.

imitate your mouth and jaw movements.

listen and understand familiar phrases like "Daddy's coming!"

say double syllables like "ba-ba, da-da, ma-ma."

**I have fun when you:**

read me a book. Point to a picture and say, "What's that?" Then name the picture for me.

show me a picture in a book, and then the same thing in our house like a cup, ball, or bib.

say the same words over and over to me while you change my diapers, give me a bath, or comb my hair.

## PREMIE NOTES

Lots of premies are very sociable and some enjoy people and frolic play earlier than full-term babies. If your premie is sociable, give him or her lots of opportunities to be with others, but try to avoid overstimulation by having too many people around at the same time. Let your baby have fun with one or two people rather than a big crowd.

*Adjusted Age — If your baby was premature this newsletter talks about baby eight months from the date due. Please do not regard this chart as a rigid time table. Some babies perform an activity earlier or later.

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Linda Carothers and Val Wilson, EDITORS

# BABY TALK

## THE WONDER OF IT ALL AT NINE MONTHS

If your baby was premature this newsletter talks about baby nine months from the date due.

### SPECIAL MESSAGE: BABY'S BIRTHDAY: A TIME OF REMEMBERING

Birthdays are a time of remembering. Many parents of high-risk infants discover they have mixed feelings about their child's first birthday. On one hand, they are excited and happy as a birthday approaches. On the other hand, parents may feel nervous, irritable, or reluctant to plan a party. Why the mixed feelings? Just as parents of full term babies can describe in complete detail the day of their child's birth, parents of high-risk infants have vivid memories of their child's birth. In addition, to the joy of a baby, they remember the fear and anxiety as they worried about their child's well-being and the consequences of an early or high-risk birth.

Remembering those anxious and scary days when your baby was in the hospital may make you feel sad, depressed, nervous, irritable, tired, or disappointed. Such feelings are common to parents whose babies had such a rough start.

As your child's first birthday approaches, take time to sort out your feelings. Know that sad feelings are normal and allow yourself some time to grieve for the birth experience you wanted but didn't get. This is one more part of parenting. Look at how far your child has come since the last "birthday," and give yourself a pat on the back for a job well done!

### HEALTH: EAR INFECTIONS

Middle ear infections are one of the most common illnesses of young children. This infection is caused by an obstruction of the hearing canal (eustachian tube) inside the ear. Children have eustachian tubes that are easily blocked by colds and allergies. When the tube is blocked, the middle ear cavity fills with fluid. Bacteria grows in this fluid, causing ear infections. Ear infections can cause pain and temporary hearing loss. It is important for your child to see a doctor if you suspect an ear infection. In babies, symptoms may be fever, rubbing or pulling at the ear, or crying with pain. Baby may also just be very fussy.

Antibiotics are used to kill the bacteria that cause ear infections. Even though the symptoms may go away after a few days, you should give Baby all the medication prescribed and return to the doctor for a re-check. The infection may be eliminated, but the middle ear fluid may still be there. It may be necessary to continue the medication to avoid another infection.

### SAFETY

As Baby begins to crawl and explore, boundaries may be needed. Gates at the top and bottom of stairs can help keep your baby safe. Accordion gates with large "V"s' at the top are no longer considered safe.

### BABY MEMOS

**KITCHEN TOYS:** Various sized cans from your pantry make good stacking and nesting toys for me. Please make sure they are clean and have no sharp edges.

**"TALKING":** Even though I am not making words myself, I understand more than you think. Talk to me as if I understand every word you say. I am trying to talk to you when I "jabber" and I love you to respond to my efforts. "Are you telling me about your day? Yes, I see, you want some dinner."

### IS MY BABY SPOILED?

Babies born with health concerns sometimes become so used to cuddling and extra attention that they are happy and feel safe only when they are being held in familiar arms. It is important for you to respond to your baby's needs, especially when he or she is sick, scared, tired, or in distress.

Sometimes it may seem as if your baby cries all day. This may be frustrating for you because you can't get anything accomplished if Baby wants to be held all the time.

Parents can teach Baby a new way of acting by doing two things: (1) reward behavior that you want to continue and (2) stop rewarding behavior you don't want to see. For Baby, the most powerful reward is your attention; patting, cuddling, kissing, and talking. If you put Baby down to go make dinner and Baby cries, paying attention to the cry rewards negative behavior. To stop the behavior you don't want to see, you must let the baby scream. Put Baby down on her tummy and let her cry. When Baby stops crying (the behavior you want to see), then pick her up and play or cuddle.

To further teach Baby to spend time playing without you, it is important to reward Baby for doing so. Start gradually. When Baby plays with a toy for one to two minutes alone, give a hug and say, "I like how you play so nicely with your toy." Baby will gradually stretch out the play periods to 5-10 minutes. You are rewarding the positive behavior instead of rewarding the crying. Baby will still need you to check on him or her frequently to help find a new toy, to invent a new game, or to give reassurance that everything is okay. Sometimes, your baby may just need to see or hear you to feel safe.

# THIS MONTH WITH BABY*

## MOVING

**I like to:**

use my thumb and one finger to pick up toys.

practice crawling. I can go anywhere I want!

hold my cup and feed myself a cracker.

get to a sitting position from a crawling position.

use furniture to help myself pull to stand.

**I have fun when you:**

give me safe wooden clothespins to put in and pour out of a bottle or can.

get in a crawling position and play chase with me. This encourages me to practice my crawling.

give me small, safe objects like Cheerios or peas so that I can practice picking things up.

## PLAYING

**I like to:**

perform for you when you reward me by clapping. I'll probably do it again.

have my own toys. I may fight to keep my toys from someone else.

be around other children. I am sensitive to them and may cry if I hear another child cry.

**I have fun when you:**

do things I can imitate like "Patty-cake," "Baby is so big," combing my hair, and waving bye-bye.

clap and smile when I perform for you.

offer me a choice between two toys. I may prefer to play with one, or I may choose both.

## THINKING

**I like to:**

uncover a toy that is covered.

look at my world by partially closing my eyes or by looking at things upside down.

remember games from a previous day. I look forward to your praise when I imitate you or follow a direction you give.

**I have fun when you:**

hide toys under a can or cloth or in your pocket so I can find them.

play games in which you jiggle me up and down, swing me around and, if you hold me tight, turn me upside down.

play games we have played before, like "Horsey" and "Peek-a-boo," because I know what will happen next.

blow bubbles for me to watch.

## COMMUNICATING

**I like to:**

imitate coughs, tongue clicks, and kisses.

use words meaningfully. I may say "Ma-ma" or "Da-da" when I am talking about you.

listen to conversation.

**I have fun when you:**

tell me a story about what I did today. Mention my name often. "Mommy and Jimmy went for a walk and Jimmy talked to a red bird."

use a variety of voices, whisper, make funny noises, or talk to me in a sing-song voice. Sounds like the buzzing of a bee, a hiss of a snake, or the glub-glub as the water goes down the drain makes me watch your mouth.

use the tape recorder to record you and me "talking."

*Adjusted Age — If your baby was premature this newsletter talks about baby nine months from the date due. Please do not regard this chart as a rigid timetable. Some babies perform an activity earlier or later.

## PREMIE NOTES

After Baby has learned to crawl, he or she will soon be ready to pull up to a standing position. There are several ways to encourage your baby to do this. One way is to put toys on the couch or coffee table so that Baby will want to stand up and reach the toy. In order to stand, Baby will start by kneeling and pull up with his or her arms. He or she needs to rest on one knee and straighten the other leg. If your premature baby wants to straighten both legs at once, then you need to give some help!

You can help your baby practice bending one leg and straightening the other. Place Baby straddling one of your legs and facing you. This is easiest if you sit on the floor with one leg straight out. As you slowly rock Baby from side to side, the leg on one side will bend as the leg on the other side straightens. Be sure to hold Baby firmly around the waist so he or she feels safe when you rock her from side to side!

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Linda Carothers and Val Wilson, EDITORS

# BABY TALK

## DEVELOPING INDEPENDENCE AT TEN MONTHS

If your baby was premature this newsletter talks about baby ten months from the date due.

### SPECIAL MESSAGE: PARENTS NEED TIME FOR EACH OTHER

Healthy babies need healthy parents. It has been said that one of the best things a mom can do for her children is to love their father and one of the best things a dad can do is to love their mother. Easy to say, right?

With all the energy and time children need, it is sometimes hard to find time to enjoy your spouse or another adult. It's very important to have time for each other, to make your relationship work, and to nurture each other. Plan some time to enjoy your spouse. Some people plan "dates". They will hire a baby sitter or trade babysitting with another couple in order to have a free night out. Some couples have a special night every week when they eat alone after the baby is asleep.

The idea is to be able to carry on an uninterrupted conversation and to have a chance to ask your spouse what he or she is feeling, and tell what you are feeling. You and your spouse deserve some undivided attention from each other. Often these times together can be so rejuvenating that you have more energy for your baby.

### DISCIPLINE: A MESSAGE FROM YOUR BABY

Be firm with me. It makes me feel safe and secure. If you give in every time I try to have my own way, I get scared. I trust you to help me set my limits.

Be positive with me. Pay attention to things I do **right.** If I get attention for my behavior, "bad" or "good", I will be more likely to repeat it.

Give me plenty of hugs and kisses. I need lots of love and attention.

Remember I like to test you to find out if you mean what you say. Just because I "test" doesn't mean I ought to have all I ask for.

Model behavior for me. I learn most from your example. If I am being loud, talk softly and I will learn to lower my voice.

### BABY MEMOS:

**TOYS:** When I am "playing" I am learning. Play is my work and toys are my tools. Toys can be pots, pie tins, empty boxes, clothespins and measuring cups. Objects that are safe and help me learn and explore my world are fun for me. I like containers I can drop objects into and dump out again. Yes, boys need dolls too. We learn to be tender and care for objects in our play. We may grow up to be dads and moms some day. The best place to store my toys is on shelves I can reach or in stacking boxes or baskets. Toy chests become junk collectors! If I already have a toy chest, check carefully and make sure the lid cannot fall down on my head or neck and hurt me!

**TALKING:** Imitate my talking and baby sounds. This tells me what sounds are important to you. But when I begin saying real words, talk to me in your normal adult speech. You do not need to correct my speech, just model the correct way for me. When I say "duice" you can say "You want juice?"

**NIGHT OWLS:** As I pull to stand and become stronger, I may not sleep well. I may cry or rock in my crib on my hands and knees. You may try rocking and singing to me quietly in a darkened room at bedtime until you feel me relax. Babies get tense too!

### PREMIE NOTES

**OVERPROTECTIVENESS** Premies need extra attention, so you have to go to great lengths to be considered overprotective that first year. Your baby needs all the protection you can give. But, don't guard Baby from everything. Bumps and falls are an important part of growing up. Babies need to learn to fall, because falling is a important part of learning balance needed for sitting and walking. Babies who are afraid to fall will have a hard time learning to walk. Babies need lots of time on the floor. Sometimes as parents we feel playpens are safer; babies are away from germs, falls and other people. But absolute safety won't teach Baby anything!

Parents who are overprotective tend to be devoted, tender-hearted people who are inclined to feel guilty when there is **no real need** for it. Begin asking yourself, "Am I being realistic about specific fears or worries?" Parents must restrain their first instincts with their babies. Sally falls down, your first instinct may be to run and pick her up, and to hold, and cuddle her. It is probably better for Sally if you restrain yourself and say, "Sally fell down. Hop up, and try again", waiting to see if Sally is really hurt.

It takes work to get beyond your overprotective instincts but for your baby's sake, as well as your own, recognize your baby's need for independence from you. (Adapted from **Your Premature Baby** by Robin Marantz Henig)

# THIS MONTH WITH BABY*

## MOVING

**I like to:**

use my index finger to point and poke.

pull to stand. I may stand alone briefly.

side step along furniture.

sit by myself. I may turn around while I am sitting.

let go of objects when I want to let go.

climb up and down from chairs.

**I have fun when you:**

encourage me to press the door bell or elevator button.

play a game of "I'll let you go if you will". Place me in a standing position at a low stool or coffee table and encourage me to imitate you as you lift your hands away from the table.

place two sturdy chairs next to each other. Encourage me to walk from one to another. Put a favorite toy in the chair furthest away from me. Gradually move the chairs further apart.

## PLAYING

**I like to:**

show my emotions and preferences.

imitate gestures, facial expressions, sounds.

express my concern toward others, though I may cry if another child receives your attention.

have favorite toys and express tenderness toward a stuffed animal or doll.

**I have fun when you:**

respect my choices. Don't push me toward people I don't like.

make silly faces with me. See if I try to make them, too.

give me a doll or stuffed toy to cuddle (even if I'm a boy). When I show tenderness to my doll I'm imitating you.

## THINKING

**I like to:**

reach behind me for a toy I can't see.

look for a hidden object if I see you hide it. I will lift a cup or box in search of a toy.

match 2 blocks.

use one hand for holding objects and one hand to manipulate my toys.

**I have fun when you:**

hide my toys in wax paper if I am not searching for hidden objects yet.

encourage me to unwrap gifts. Help me by starting a hole in the paper. It helps me learn and I have more fun if you spread my gift opening over several days.

show me books or magazines with pictures of people. Name the simple body parts on the picture and then on you and me ("clown's nose, baby's nose, Daddy's nose").

## COMMUNICATING

**I like to:**

learn words and the motion associated with that word, such as "no" (shake head) or "bye-bye" (wave hands).

say one or two words or listen to familiar words.

follow simple commands. Such as, "hand me the ball", or "kiss the baby".

**I have fun when you:**

sing songs or say finger plays with motions like "Pat-a-Cake", "Itsy, Bitsy Spider", or "Row Your Boat".

read me simple picture books. Ask me to point to the pictures I recognize.

provide many opportunities for me to show what I understand. Say "Where's Daddy?", when he's in my sight. Ask "Where's your bottle?" Say, "Give me a kiss" and encourage me to respond with a kiss.

*Adjusted Age — If your baby was premature this newsletter talks about baby ten months from the date due. Please do not regard this chart as a rigid time table. Some babies perform an activity earlier or later.

## SAFETY: EXPLORER IN DIAPERS

When babies learn to crawl, there is a whole new world for them to explore. They are naturally curious. This curiosity is a natural way of learning that leads to exciting discoveries. But it is also dangerous and parents must be constantly on guard. Check your house for safety by getting on your child's level. Is it safe? Remove all cleaning materials from low cupboards. Kiddy latches are also helpful. Keep medicines locked up and avoid leaving medicines on bedside tables, cabinets or in pocketbooks.

A trash can can be a death trap. Medicines, razor blades, spoiled foods, partially empty cans, and bottles should be disposed of safely. Never refer to medicines as candy. Baby aspirin and childrens' vitamins are especially tempting to children. When you child-proof your house your child will have more freedom to explore and learn in a safe place.

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Linda Carothers and Val Wilson, EDITORS

# BABY TALK

## DOING THINGS MYSELF AT ELEVEN MONTHS

If your baby was premature this newsletter talks about baby eleven months from the date due.

### SPECIAL MESSAGE: COMMUNICATING IS MORE THAN TALKING

Language development begins long before we ever hear a baby's first words. Babies spend months learning to use their mouths, experimenting with sounds, and learning to listen. The first words we hear are special because it means for the first time our baby can tell us what he or she is thinking.

Children begin saying words at various ages, some as early as nine months and some not until the age of two. Being an early or late talker has little to do with how smart or verbal a child will be. The important thing about language is not when a child talks, but how successful the child feels about communicating. Does your child communicate his wants and needs other than by crying? Does your child understand and follow simple directions such as, "Hand me the ball," "Want juice?", or "Show me the baby in the mirror"? If not, then your child probably does not feel successful communicating. If you are concerned about your child's communication, you should seek advice from your doctor.

Your child's language will continue to develop as long as your child feels that he is communicating needs and wants successfully

### SAFETY

As your baby begins to toddle, a new learning stage for parents and Baby begins. Baby learns to investigate and explore and parents learn what babies can get into and out of! Mom knows if it is too quiet that she better go check to see if Baby is into something! She is usually right. The roll of toilet paper or the trash can are always fun! Your home is your baby's classroom. The curiosity that will make your child successful in school is the same curiosity that motivates your baby now. If you constantly say, "No-no," and slap hands, your baby will soon forget about exploring.

What can you do to set limits without destroying curiosity? Remove things that are fragile and dangerous, giving your baby the freedom to move and explore without danger. Some people say, "Oh, I don't worry about safety. Kim is never out of my sight." This attitude makes you the policeman. Emergency room workers often hear, "He was only out of my sight for a second."

### DISCIPLINE

In order to teach your children what you want them to do and how you want them to behave, give them directions positively. Instead of saying, "Don't yell," ask for the behavior you want to see such as, "Use a quiet voice." Also, you use a quiet voice to give your messages. Giving your child a message about what you want to see happen helps your child learn to behave.

| Negative | Positive |
|---|---|
| "Don't spill." | "Hold your cup up." |
| "Don't throw the ball." | "Let's roll your ball." |
| "Don't touch the matches." | "Hand me the matches." |

You may have to help your child follow the positive direction by modeling the behavior. Help your child to hold the cup up, roll the ball, or hand you the forbidden object.

### BABY MEMOS:

**WALKING AND TALKING.** Learning to walk and talk at the same time may be too much for a little person! Each takes up all of my attention. I really want to walk, and while I'm learning I may slow down a bit in my language development. This doesn't mean I am not doing anything about language. I am listening. I understand more words than I can say. In fact, if you know how much I understand you may not say so many things in front of me! I also practice the sounds that I hear. You may be surprised to discover I can imitate your voice when you are upset with me.

**TESTING PARENTS:** I may sometimes act deliberately "naughty" or try out new and mischievous behavior just to see what you will do. I am testing my independence and your confidence. I may try to make feeding or bedtime a battle. Remember, I should eat to please myself, not you. Allow me to finger feed myself and remember I am messy. I eat very little at this age anyway. One good meal a day is adequate. If I throw food or spit it out, just take it away for a minute. Give me another chance, but if I "act out" again, just take the food away and let me leave the table. I am probably not hungry!

**BEDTIME:** If bedtime becomes a problem, now is the time to establish a bedtime routine, such as reading a story or singing. Stick to the routine and try not to rush me. Try not to let anyone engage in active or exciting play one hour before my bedtime. Use your voice to comfort me if I fuss after I am alone.

### PREMIE NOTES

Once your child starts pulling to stand, you can't keep him or her down. Parents no longer need to discourage standing as before, but it is important to observe how your child is standing. If your baby spends more time standing on his or her toes than on full flat feet, consult your doctor. Your baby may need special exercises to help him or her learn to stand flat on his/her feet.

# THIS MONTH WITH BABY*

## MOVING

**I like to:**

stand alone.

stand alone and lean over or pivot my body 90 degrees.

squat and stoop.

hold crayons and make marks.

hold a spoon and try to feed myself.

untie my shoe laces and pull off my socks.

**I have fun when you:**

put toys, such as a busy box, on a couch or chair that is my height so I can stand and play.

roll a ball to me. Help me bend over to pick it up. This helps me practice my balance. Use a large ball first, then smaller and smaller.

teach me "Ring-around-the-Rosie." This teaches me to move up and down.

let me finger paint, even though it's messy. I learn about textures and I practice using my fingers.

tape paper to the table when I first practice using crayons.

## PLAYING

**I like to:**

assert myself to my brothers and sisters.

depend on Mom.

seek approval and try to avoid disapproval.

extend a toy to you, but I may not release it.

test my limits with you.

**I have fun when:**

Mom helps me.

I may suddenly reject help from anyone but Mom. This is temporary. Encourage Dad or others to find more time to play and have fun with me. Dad may gradually take over my favorite activity such as bathing or feeding. I may do much better if Mom is out of sight!

I play that "I offer you a toy, but not give it up" game. I can let go but I don't want to. Praise me when I show you my toy. Encourage me to show it to Daddy or my stuffed animals. If I drop it, please return it to me immediately.

## THINKING

**I like to:**

explore containers, lift lids on boxes, put my fingers in holes.

remove objects such as blocks and pegs from cups or boxes.

associate actions with objects like meows for kittens and pointing up when I see a bird.

**I have fun when you:**

give me plastic containers with lids to take on and off. Margarine or whipped topping containers are great.

let me take small objects out of containers. An old pocketbook with my own set of keys, bangle bracelets, wooden blocks, and other fun junk will entertain me for a long time. This may be a fun thing to keep by the phone for me to play with when you need telephone time.

encourage my experiments as long as they are safe.

## COMMUNICATING

**I like to:**

imitate inflections, speech rhythms and facial expressions.

have conversations with you.

point to body parts.

**I have fun when you:**

speak to me, putting extra emphasis on different words. "Do you want to **eat**?" "That's a **soft** bear!" "Look. A **dog**!"

sing songs and rhymes which have nice inflections or ups and downs in tone, such as "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," "This Little Piggy," and "Hickory, Dickory, Dock".

imitate sounds and take turns talking with me. Let me talk, then you have a turn, then give me a turn.

name body parts for me when we play in the mirror. Show me your nose. Ask me to point to my nose.

*Adjusted Age — If your baby was premature this newsletter talks about Baby eleven months from the date due. Please do not regard this chart as a rigid time table. Some babies perform an activity earlier or later.

BABY TALK is a series of newsletters for parents of high-risk infants birth through eighteen months. These newsletters were developed by First Years Together through a grant from Handicapped Children's Early Education Program, U.S. Office of Special Education to Project Enlightenment, Wake County Public School System, 501 S. Boylan Ave., Raleigh, N.C. 27603. For additional information, write or call (919) 755-6935.

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Linda Carothers and Val Wilson, EDITORS

# BABY TALK

## STEPPING OUT AT TWELVE MONTHS

If your baby was premature this newsletter talks about baby twelve months from the date due.

### SPECIAL MESSAGE: WALKING A LINE BETWEEN DEPENDENCE AND INDEPENDENCE

At twelve months, your baby can do so many things. At times, your baby seems so independent that he or she hardly needs you at all. And then the next moment your baby seems to cling to you tightly and need you all the more! This flip-flop between independence and dependence is very common and happens throughout childhood. When your baby learns new things and gains major new skills, his or her world is expanded. This is scary and sometimes causes your baby to need to hold on to Mommy and Daddy even more. Encourage and applaud the new skills your baby is learning but be available when he or she needs a little reassurance.

### IMITATION

As babies near the first birthday, they begin to imitate more and more things they see people do. They pick up pens and try to write; they cuddle dolls and kiss "their babies"; they carry on "conversations" with toys and people even though the "words" are mostly strings of sounds. Babies show us by their reactions how much they have learned about the world. Every time they imitate another behavior, they learn something new about the world and show us what it is.

Encourage your baby to imitate you in actions and games. At first, praise and applaud even the slightest attempt by baby to imitate. For example, if you are playing a game in which you want your baby to put pegs in the holes, first you put the pegs in, then let your baby try. As soon as you see Baby moving the peg near the hole, say, "that's right. Put it in the hole. Good job!" Your immediate praise will help your baby learn to imitate specific actions, and also learn that imitating is a good way to learn about many new things.

### PREMIE NOTE

Barefoot is best for babies as they begin walking. Shoes are okay if needed for warmth or protection. Baby shoes should have plenty of toe space, a flat heel, and no arch support. They should be light-weight and comfortable. Cotton socks which allow feet to breathe are best for babies. Special shoes are rarely needed.

### BABY MEMOS:

**FUSSINESS:** As I get older, I may seem aggressive and impatient at times. I used to take everything in stride. Now I may make a fuss if I want to play and you need to change my diaper or if you are ready to go and I'm busy playing. Try and distract me, talk to me about what we are doing, and if I'm still fussing, I may just need to fuss about changes. Just pick me up firmly and change me or take me to the car. When I'm mad and fussy, don't try to continue to reason with me. I can't be reasoned with when I am fussing. I may continue to fuss and be mad, but it will only take a few minutes for me to be my happy self again!

**BUMPS:** With your help, I am learning to laugh at my minor bumps and bruises. I learn how to react to situations by how you react to them. If I fall gently and you rush to me as if I broke my leg, I will cry just to please you. If you just say, "Uh-oh. Hop up. Do you need a kiss?" I will soon be over my fall and on my merry way. You will know by my reaction if I'm really hurt and need more comforting.

**EMOTIONS:** My emotions come and go easily. One second I may laugh, and the next second I may cry. I switch my feelings back and forth in an instant. Expect these ups and downs in my emotional life. All babies have them. I am beginning to experience what people mean by forgiveness. I still become angry when someone restricts me, but more and more, I am able to forget it quickly and "forgive." This shows I'm growing up!

**TOILET TRAINING:** You may feel that when I start walking I am ready for toilet training. Probably, I'm not. It is better to wait until I am older and can talk to you about this. Toilet training works best if you don't rush me. I will learn this complicated skill with much less effort when I am two to two-and-a-half years old. People will tell you I am old enough now, but I'm not! People say their babies were trained at twelve months but I'm not toilet trained until I can do it myself!

# THIS MONTH WITH BABY*

## MOVING

**I like to:**

try to walk. I can pull myself up, take steps, and spend lots of time moving

climb up and down the stairs.

lower myself to a sitting position.

try and feed myself.

put blocks in and out of a small box, take lids off containers, and take toys apart.

**I have fun when you:**

give me lots of opportunities to move. Leave me on the floor a lot. Stand me up by the couch and encourage me to come to you. Sometimes I like to hold your hands and practice walking around and around.

roll a ball or blow bubbles so I can chase them.

give me a car or truck to push as I crawl.

give me an old pocketbook that I can hide my treasures in and empty to my delight.

## PLAYING

**I like to:**

imitate waving, saying bye-bye, clapping hands, closing my eyes, blowing a kiss.

help dress myself by putting my arms out for sleeves.

give affection to familiar people and toys.

**I don't like:**

strange people, places, or new food.

when you leave me, even for five minutes.

napping. I may throw tantrums when I can't have my way. Give me a special toy to keep while I nap.

**I have fun when you:**

give me a ball. Roll it to me. Ask me to roll it back.

take me shopping with you and let me talk to people if I want.

play "advanced" peek-a-boo. Hide around the corner and call to me.

let me dress myself. Show me where my head and my arms go. Ask me to lift my arms or my legs when I need to.

tell me good-bye when you leave and that you'll come back.

## THINKING

**I like to:**

unwrap toys, and find toys hidden under a box, cup, or pillow.

make things happen and experiment with action and reaction. When I pull the trash can it falls over!

experiment with sizes.

try to build towers and other buildings.

turn pages in a book.

**I have fun when you:**

hide toys under blankets or cups so that I can find them.

tie a toy on the end of a string to my high chair so that when I drop my toy I can pull it back up.

give me things that I can put together, take apart, turn, open, close, and switch. I like cabinet doors, keys in locks, small drawers, plastic bottles and tops, measuring cups and spoons, boxes with lids.

give me blocks or boxes that I can stack. Show me how I can build. Let me knock down your towers.

## COMMUNICATING

**I like to:**

follow simple directions like, "Give it to Mommy," "Come to Daddy," "Clap your hands."

babble with rhythm. I may say one word.

imitate you when you make playful sounds.

look at a book when you talk about the pictures.

listen quietly while you sing to me. When you finish, I bounce and jabber to tell you with my whole body to sing some more.

recognize my name and turn to see who called me.

**I have fun when you:**

play games with me where I can follow simple directions like "Clap my hands," or "Blow a kiss."

read to me. Show me pictures of animals and name them and tell me the sounds they make.

ask me, "What does a dog say?" and give me a chance to think even if I don't know the answer.

imitate sounds I make.

tell me nursery rhymes and sing songs to me.

tell me all about places we are going and what we are seeing.

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Linda Carothers and Val Wilson, EDITORS

# BABY TALK

## THINKING ABOUT ANOTHER PREGNANCY

### SPECIAL MESSAGE: MORE BABIES?

As babies begin walking and talking, they seem to change from babies to toddlers almost overnight. You realize "I don't have a baby any more!" This "loss" sometimes prompts parents to have another child.

Spacing of children is an important decision and a big responsibility. Parents worry about how their children will get along. Some parents hope that close spacing will make the children closer friends. This is usually not the case. Research shows that children tolerate the birth of a sibling better after the age of three. However, spacing is probably not as important as how well **you** can tolerate the pressures of another baby.

As a parent of a high-risk infant, you have experienced more worry than most. Concerns about your baby's hospitalization, health and development, and extra financial responsibilities have added stress. Make sure you and your spouse have recovered physically and emotionally and have the stamina to take on another pregnancy. Remember now you felt during your pregnancy and decide if you can cope with a toddler, fatigue, and morning sickness!

Also, remember that any woman who gave birth to a premature baby is at risk for having another preterm delivery. This means that you need to talk to your obstetrician and be in the best health possible before you get pregnant again.

### PRETERM LABOR

"Will this happen again?" is the frequent concern of parents of preterm babies. You have first hand experience of the emotional, physical, and financial impact of a delivery that was not care free and you have experienced the anxiety that accompanies the decision to try again.

Women who have delivered a preterm infant (before thirty-seven weeks) are at a higher risk for another earlier delivery. Research is currently being conducted in North Carolina and across the United States about causes of and cures for preterm labor. It is thought that teaching mothers the early subtle signs of preterm labor, identifying and monitoring mothers who are more likely to have preterm babies, and prompt treatment of women in preterm labor can lessen the chances of preterm delivery. Early detection of preterm labor is the critical factor in stopping preterm delivery.

### DETECTING PREMATURE LABOR

This simple technique can help detect the regular uterine contractions of premature labor, should preterm labor happen to you. It is a self-monitoring method that every pregnant woman should know.

1. Twice a day, once in the morning and again in the afternoon or evening, lie on a bed or sofa with pillows behind your back to prop you toward your left side. The flat-on-your back position should be avoided during pregnancy since it allows the heavy uterus to compress major blood vessels and disrupt circulation. Have a clock watch with a second hand close by.
2. Place both of your hands on top of your uterus and feel for contractions with your fingertips. Contractions begin at the top of the uterus, causing your abdomen to become hard - like the tip of your nose or harder. You may even see your abdomen move up slightly. During a contraction, the tightness increases, reaches a peak, then lessens. Contractions may be painless.
3. If you have contractions, drink two or three glasses of water or juice. If contractions don't go away after an hour of rest, notify your doctor, clinic or hospital.

## KNOW THE SIGNS OF PRETERM LABOR

**Contractions of the uterus.**

**Menstrual-like cramps** that come and go or don't go away.

**Pelvic pressure** that feels like the baby is pushing down.

**Low, dull backache** that comes and goes or doesn't go away.

**Abdominal cramping** with or without diarrhea.

**Increase or change in vaginal discharge.**

## REMEMBER: PRETERM LABOR IS USUALLY NOT PAINFUL. IF YOU HAVE ANY OF THE SIGNS OF PRETERM LABOR:

lie down on your side for an hour and drink two or three glasses of water or juice

If the signs do not go away, or if you have fluid leaking from your vagina, call your doctor or clinic immediately.

## BABY MEMOS:

**Climbing:** I am climbing into, onto, and through everything! Falls are a part of toddlerhood. As I explore, you must expect some falls. There are some things you can do to protect me. Put a rug under my changing table, and gates at the top and bottom of stairs. Keep the chairs pushed under the dining table to discourage my climbing in the kitchen. I may try to climb bookshelves if I see something high up that I really want!

Fortunately my body is well designed. The soft spot on my head (anterior fontanel) does not close until eighteen months or so. This allows my head to "give" when I get a knock. My bottom is also well padded. If I fall and am unconscious, dazed or unconsolable, I should see a doctor.

Teaching me how to bend in the middle to a sitting position will reduce my head knocks. Show me how to go up and down stairs to reduce the risk of falls. Give me opportunities to climb safely. I love a short stool to climb on and a large sturdy box to climb in and out of!

**Which hand?** You may wonder whether I am right or left handed. I may switch hand preference several times before I decide which hand I want to use. Let me practice with both and decide for myself.

**Geometry:** Did you know I am learning geometry? I am learning the difference between round and square. I am curious about space. I like to poke my fingers into holes, put things into containers and dump them out. I am learning what will fit into some spaces and what won't. You may have to rescue me from tight spots! I learn by trial and error and sometimes my errors cause me to get my hand or body stuck!

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Linda Carothers and Val Wilson, EDITORS

# BABY TALK

## PLAY IS LEARNING

### SPECIAL MESSAGE: PLAY IS IMPORTANT

Playing and learning go hand in hand. Play is the natural way a child learns. Through play, children learn to concentrate, exercise their imaginations, try out ideas, practice grown-up behavior, develop a sense of control over their world, and practice the new skills they are learning. For example, children about thirteen months spend a lot of time playing about inside and outside. They will spend a long time practicing putting a block inside a box and taking it out. Over and over they will climb into a box or cart. Through this play, children are learning about the inside and outside of objects and the relationship between large and small. This play also helps children practice control of their hands and fingers.

Your baby needs time to play alone, but he or she also needs time to play with you and other playmates. Children need both kinds of play. Research shows that the more baby plays with others (social play), the more baby will play alone (independent play). It is not surprising then that you are your child's favorite toy!

### WHAT MAKES A GOOD TOY?

Children need toys that help them play, not that play for them. Choose toys thoughtfully. Remember, not all toys need to be bought. Children enjoy playing with lots of things that are around your house. There are some things to remember when choosing toys for your baby.

A good toy is safe. It does not have sharp edges or small pieces that can fall off and cause choking. A good toy is fun. It can be enjoyed over and over, day after day.

Many toys are fun for a few minutes, but not after that. Think about a battery operated dog. You push the button and he barks. Your child will laugh but not day after day. A toy telephone provides fun for your baby day after day. Your child can talk to you, to Daddy, to Grandma, and all sorts of pretend people.

A good toy is durable. A good toy has the child actively involved. Contrast a battery operated toy with a set of wooden blocks. All the child has to do to the battery operated toy is push a button and watch. With blocks, the play is in the child. The possibilities of what the child can make with blocks is endless.

Good toys are age-appropriate and suited to the development needs of the child. An infant who can't sit up does not need a riding toy, but a toddler really enjoys a riding toy. A good toy allows your child a chance to be creative. A good toy can be played with in more than one way. A good toy will last through several ages. For example, consider a play doctor's kit. Your child can pretend to be a doctor, a nurse, or a patient. The child can take care of you or a friend or a baby doll. A doctor's kit can be enjoyed through many ages beginning at twelve months on through age eight or nine.

### BABY MEMOS

**MY FAVORITE TOY:** I especially like playing with you. You are my favorite toy! I like the way we sing, dance, play hide and seek, and read quietly together. I learn lots by playing with you. I learn that I am loved, that I am capable and fun to be with, that I can make conversation, and that being with people is nice.

**CLEANING UP:**

Cleaning up is a very hard concept for me to learn. I would much rather take out than put away. You can help me learn about cleaning up by making clean-up a game and doing it with me. You put a block in the basket and ask me to do it. I may still balk but if you keep it fun and like a game, I will soon learn to help. Remember, I love to imitate you!

# BABY MEMOS

**TOYS AROUND THE HOUSE:** I like to play with lots of things around the house. I can stack soup cans or put plastic bowls inside each other. I like to use measuring spoons and measuring cups for pouring. I love to imitate you and pretend to cook when you are cooking. I like to pretend to dress up like you. I enjoy trying on your shoes, having a pocketbook or bag for my treasures, wearing a hat.

One of my favorite toys is a big box. I love to climb inside and hide and pretend it is my car or a house or fire truck or boat.

Empty plastic containers or clean squirt bottles are great fun for me in the bath. Punch holes in an old margarine container and I can make a waterfall. I love to play in water; it helps me to relax. Cover the commode; I may try to play in there!

**TOY STORAGE:** What do you do with all those toys? I am often more interested in dragging the toys out than I am in playing with them. One of the best ways to keep my toys interesting is to put some of them away for a while. Put about a third of my toys in a box and store them for several weeks. When they come out again they are just like new to me! This will save you lots of "picking up toys" time too.

A shelf is a better place to store my toys than a toy chest. Small stacking baskets, vegetable bins, clear plastic shoe box containers, plastic tubs or baskets are great for storing and sorting toys. I can see what I want to get much better and the boxes help me learn to organize.

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

"There is no greater joy than to see a child so taken by a toy or book that he doesn't know the world around him exists . . . you can almost see the little wheels move as he makes a toy, puzzle, or book come to life."
(Dennis D. Dunn, **Growing Child,** November, 1985)

## TOYS FOR INFANTS

Infants need variety of touch, sight, sound toys. Some toys for infants include:

safe toys to mouth and te he
rattles
clutch balls
unbreakable mirror
"busy box"
toys to grasp and squeeze
toys for bath
toys that make noise
shape sorters
small plastic cups that nest and stack

## TOYS FOR ONE-YEAR-OLDS

One year olds are explorers in the land of take apart and put together. Some toys one-year-olds enjoy include:

stacking rings
snap-lock beads
bath toys and sand toys
surprise box
toy telephone
light weight blocks
small riding toy
simple shape sorter
simple puzzle
ball
toys to push along the floor

## TOYS FOR EIGHTEEN-MONTH-OLDS

One-and-a-half-year-olds need toys that deal with the real world. They have fun with:

shape sorters
push and pull toys
wooden blocks
teddy bears and dolls
small cook stove
crayons
shopping cart
dump truck
pounding board
toy drum
big legos

## TOYS FOR TWO-YEAR-OLDS

Two-year-olds are busy building muscles and playing make-believe. They enjoy:

rhythm instruments
riding toys
pull wagon
string beads
rocking horse
chalk board and chalk
simple object puzzles
pegs and pegboard
doll
small cars and trucks
doctor's kit

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Linda Carothers and Val Wilson, EDITORS

# BABY TALK

## TODDLERHOOD: A PREVIEW OF ADOLESCENCE

**EXCITABLE - CURIOUS - ENERGETIC - FUNNY - MOODY - INDEPENDENT - STRONG - CHARMING - TALKATIVE - LOVING - CLINGY - POSSESSIVE - PLAYFUL -FEARFUL**

Toddlerhood is the transition between infancy and childhood. Many child development specialists call this period between fifteen months and thirty-six months of age, a preview of adolescence. It is a fun but challenging period for parents who must learn to live with the ambivalence that their toddler is feeling. One minute, Toddler wants to be a baby and have Mom and Dad do everything, and the next minute, Toddler is very independent and convinced, "ME CAN DO IT MYSELF!"

Remember that Toddlerhood is a phase of development. Moodiness, "no" tantrums, and clinginess are part of becoming an independent, separate person. Parents of toddlers are beginning to learn to "let go" and allow their baby to have some control, learn independence, and become a child. This is a hard thing to do. As parents, we often want to keep our baby, while at the same time wanting our child to do things independently. Not only are our toddlers ambivalent - so are we!

A lot of toddler behaviors are annoying even though they are a normal phase of development. The frequent "no's", bursting into tears when not allowed one's own way, the constant "into everything", the "dawdling", and the testing of limits and boundaries are sometimes hard not to take personally. Many parents of toddlers report feeling that they have failed as parents and are doing something wrong. Your child still loves you and needs you, even though sometimes it seems that your toddler is always ready to do the opposite of what you've asked.

### TODDLER STRENGTHS

Toddlers love to present, to explore, and to be outside.

Toddlers love to imitate, to help you, and to learn about words.

Toddlers love to dance, to play in water, and to laugh.

Use what your toddler loves to help encourage him or her to cooperate.

### TIPS FOR PARENTING TODDLERS:

Try not to say "no" all the time. Offer choices. Give your toddler ways to have control and assert independence. "Would you like to go outside and play or stay inside and play?" "Would you like to wear a sweater or a jacket?"

Toddler-proof your house. Lessen your "no's" by putting objects you don't want your toddler to play with out of reach or behind locks.

Use humor and games with your toddlers. Children love to laugh and be silly. They will often cooperate willingly rather than balk about what you need them to do if you make it a game. For example: "Let's pretend to be bunnies and hop to the table for dinner." "Bear is sleepy. Let's put him to bed and you can rest with him."

Set a timer. When the timer tings, it's time for bath. It's harder to have an argument with a timer.

Set only a few limits. You must have safety rules. Choose the things your toddler does that drive you the craziest and target these behaviors for a few rules. Toddlers need boundaries but have a hard time accepting rules. Save teaching table manners and social graces until your child is past toddlerhood.

Turn all that toddler energy into useful channels. If your toddler is being too active, put on some music and dance. You can put on slower music to help your toddler slow down. Allow your toddler lots of safe ways to move and climb.

Baths are soothing. Toddlers enjoy water play and like having different size containers to use for pouring and sorting. Sometimes a bath can help an out-of-control toddler feel better.

Remember nothing you do will work with your toddler all the time.

# BABY MEMOS

**MINE:** I have a very hard time sharing. I'm just learning about "mine." I think everything that I see and want is mine, even things in the store. I have to understand "mine" before I can learn to share. Sometimes I will spontaneously share my toys with a friend. You can tell me what a good job I did. Your praise will help me learn. If you make me share, that isn't really sharing.

Help me take turns. If I know I can have a turn with my truck, I will be more willing to let someone else play with it, too. For me, taking turns is easier than sharing.

**CHECKING IN:** Strange places frighten me. I may try to hide behind you or refuse to talk if I am around people I don't know. In places where I am comfortable, like home or a friend's house, I may leave you and explore but still like to be able to see you and "check in."

**BEDTIME:** Sometimes it's hard for me to go to bed. I have a hard time stopping. Having a regular bedtime and a routine about going to bed will help me to wind down. Put my pajamas on and share some quiet time with me. Read to me or talk to me about our day. I might enjoy being rocked or having you rub my back. Doing the same routine every night will help me to go to bed.

**NO:** I like to say "no." It makes me feel like I'm in control. I like to say it so much, sometimes I say "no" even when I mean "yes." I really enjoy playing games where I can say "no." Ask me if rocks are soft and other silly questions so I can have fun saying "no."

TOILET TRAINING: I will be interested in the toilet and how it works. I probably won't be ready to be toilet trained until I'm two and one-half to three years old. If you wait until I'm ready, it will be easier for both of us.

**TANTRUMS:** Life is frustrating for me. There are so many things I want to do and can't. I get very frustrated when I can't have my own way, or when I try to build a tower with my blocks and down they fall. I get frustrated when I can't make words I want to say. I may throw a tantrum. This is my way of letting off steam. It is hard to be a toddler and sometimes having a tantrum helps me to feel better. Just ignore me while I have my tantrum. When I'm finished, I will probably like a hug.

**APPETITE:** I might have a funny appetite. Sometimes I like to eat and sometimes I don't. Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, a famous pediatrician, says I only need to eat four things a day during my whole second year: a pint of milk, a little orange juice, a little meat or egg, and a multi-vitamin. Just offer me good food, and I will eat what I need.

**CHOICES:** I learn new things best when I can make choices. You can help me learn by talking to me and showing me about the things I have chosen. Before I am interested, if you drill me on colors or letters, it will take me a long time to learn. If you wait, I will learn about colors and letters and shapes when I'm three or four years old much more quickly because I'll be more interested and ready.

**BEING GOOD:** I know that I'm not supposed to bother the T.V., but sometimes I just can't help it. It's so much fun to make the picture appear just by pushing that magic button!

Remember that I'm not trying to be bad. Sometimes I get so interested in things I'm doing and in figuring out how the world works that I forget our rules and make a mess. When I put milk in my macaroni and cheese, I don't mean to cause you trouble; I just wonder how it looks together, and I do so love to pour!

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Linda Carothers and Val Wilson, EDITORS

# BABY TALK

## SETTING LIMITS FOR YOUR TODDLER

### SPECIAL MESSAGE: LIMITS

Setting limits is one of the hardest skills parents must learn. Effective limit-setting means the ability to set clear guidelines and rules that help children understand which behaviors are acceptable. Children need limits, and they do not have the experience or self-control to set limits themselves. Without boundaries childrens' curiosity, impulsiveness and impatience can lead to pain and frustration. Remember, limit-setting does not come naturally to most parents. Like riding a bicycle, it is a skill to be practiced and learned.

The aim of limit-setting is to teach children self-control. Babies are not born with the ability to set limits. They need parents to provide their limits. As children grow they develop new levels of self-control. Over time, with repetition and practice, children learn their limits and no longer need our reminders. A four-year-old for example, may no longer need us to set a limit about playing near a hot stove, but may still need a limit about playing in the street. With your help, your child gains more experiences which will help him or her develop better judgement and self-control. That is our ultimate goal.

### SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN YOU ARE SETTING LIMITS

- Limits need to be appropriate for the age of your child. It is important to know what your toddler's physical, mental, and emotional capabilities are. A good child development book such as **Your Toddler,** by Johnson and Johnson, can help you know what you can expect for children at different ages.
- Children need practice and repetition before a limit becomes a learned behavior. Just as children fall down many times as they learn to walk, learning a limit involves much trial and error.
- Children may need to test or try our limits. When children test limits they act out in a rebellious way. Your child may say "no", shake her head, or do what you just made a limit about to see if you will stop her. What she really wants to know is, "Do you really mean what you say?"
- Act, don't overexplain. Follow through with the limits you set instead of nagging or coaxing. If you talk about a limit five times before acting, the child may learn to wait until the fifth request, before acting.
- Give children another chance. Let them know they always have the opportunity to try to behave appropriately at another time.
- Parents are more effective if they are calm and definite. Attempts at setting limits are less effective when parents are either too angry and harsh or too tentative and hesitant.

### THE LANGUAGE OF LIMIT-SETTING — LET YOUR WORDS WORK FOR YOU!

1. **Be specific and clear.** Use words that describe exactly what you want to happen. Keep it short and to the point. Limits that are short and to the point are easier to remember.

| Vague and General | Specific and Clear |
|---|---|
| "Be nice to the cat" | "Pat the cat gently." Show your child how to pat the cat gently. |

2. **Be simple, brief, and to the point.** When you are setting a limit, make sure the limit is stated briefly and simply. Limits said in a few words are easier for children to remember.

| Long-winded and complex | Simple and brief |
|---|---|
| "You know we have to wash your hair because there is sand in it from this afternoon when you were playing in the sandbox, and it will start to itch. You know I'll use this shampoo that's made especially for children so it won't sting your eyes. | "I'm going to shampoo your hair now." |

3. **State directions positively.** Children are likely to follow suggestions you give them. Positive directions increase a child's desire to cooperate.

| Negative | Positive |
|---|---|
| "Don't bother me, I'm eating dinner." | "Find a toy (a specific suggestion: blocks) to play with while I finish my dinner." |
| "Don't run in the store." | "Please walk inside the store." |

4. **Save "no" and "don't" for the biggies.** If children hear "no" and "don't" often, they tend to ignore these words. If you save "no" or "don't" for three or four important limits, your child tends to listen better. This is especially important for safety issues.

   "Don't touch the electrical outlet."
   "Stop. You need to hold my hand when you cross the street."

5. **Offer choices whenever possible.** Offering choices encourages children to make decisions and take responsibility for their behavior. You can also use choices to get children started on activities they don't want to do. Only offer a choice if you can live with either option. Remember, adding "okay" to your limit makes it a choice, not a limit.

| Order or Command | Choice |
|---|---|
| "Stop squirming. I have to change your diaper." | "While I change your diaper, should we sing 'Mary Had a Little Lamb', or 'Row Your Boat'?" |
| "It's time to go, we have to get dressed." | "Do you want to put on your socks or shirt first?" |
| "Put your coat on, okay?" | "You need to put on your coat or stay inside." |

6. **Replace threats with clear expectations and consequences.** Threats are often made when we are irritated or frustrated and we often don't follow through.

| Threat | Clear Expectation |
|---|---|
| "If you don't do what I say, you're going to get it!" | "It is time to come inside. You can walk or I can carry you." |

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Linda Carothers and Val Wilson, EDITORS

# BABY TALK

## TODDLER FUN

### KEEPING UP WITH YOUR TODDLER

Keeping up with a toddler is an exciting, but demanding job. They are curious and independent. Their inquisitiveness often exceeds their abilities.

Remember, you are your toddler's favorite toy. Your laughter, fun and involvement all feed your toddler's zest for life and learning. Your toddler will appreciate the time you spend together much more than a clean house.

Toddlers generally have a very short attention span. Sometimes a toddler will play with a toy or activity for ten or fifteen minutes if it is very interesting to them, but usually toddlers play with one activity for only a couple of minutes. You need simple toys and play opportunities to keep them happy and busy, and you need **plenty** of them. Listed below are some games and activities that toddlers often enjoy.

### "HELP" IN THE KITCHEN

Toddlers love to get out pots, pans, and spoons and make music. Lots of kitchen "things" can make sounds.

You might hide objects like a wooden spoon in the kitchen or another room and let the child find it. For a toddler, hide it in an easy spot and give hints.

Try putting a large piece of paper on the floor to draw on. Tape the paper down so it won't slide.

Play dough and cookie cutters may be played with on a protected floor or table or high chair.

It's fun to take a kitchen timer, turn to five minutes, hide the timer, and let your toddler find it by the ticking sound.

Your child will enjoy "helping" cook by having pots and a spoon for stirring a pretend meal while you cook.

You can put toddler on a stool beside you to watch what you're cooking and let toddler add the ingredients: dump in flour or whatever.

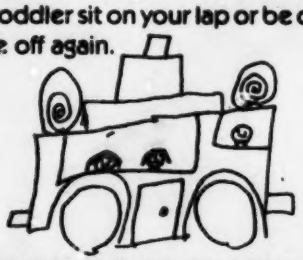
### "I'M ON THE PHONE!"

Your toddler may enjoy his own "phone" to talk on.

Have available a special box or bag with fun items such as silly putty, bangle bracelets and nesting cups close by the phone. These are to be played with only when you are on the phone.

Magnetic letters or shapes are fun to play with on the refrigerator.

Try letting toddler sit on your lap or be close to you if he or she can stay quiet. Often after a hug, your toddler may be ready to be off again.



### TRAVEL WITH TODDLER

Try tape recording favorite books that your toddler can listen to while you are in the car. There is a wide variety of audio-tapes available for preschoolers.

It is fun to wrap small packages and fill with surprises such as pretzels, cheerios, fruit roll-ups, and small toys, etc. These can be given to your toddler at intervals on the trip.

Magnetic ABC letters or other magnets are fun to stick on a small cookie sheet which has been placed across the car seat.

You can make a travel box out of a covered sheet-cake pan. Put paper, crayons, small cars and trucks inside. Your toddler can use this top as a table.

Let toddler have a steering wheel on the car seat to drive.

Encourage your toddler to look for trucks or buses or animals as you travel along the highway.

Sing silly songs together.

## "IT'S RAINING OUTSIDE!"

A fun obstacle course can be made using masking tape on the rug or carpet. This "highway" can also be used with their cars or trucks.

Let your toddler tear favorite pictures out of old magazines. You might pick a topic, such as food, colors or animals.

Try turning a chair upside down. Cut the center out of paper plates and have a ring toss.

Grocery bags make great vests or masks and toddlers enjoy decorating them with crayons.

Coffee and soup cans make great nesting or building cans. Cover with contact paper and make sure lid tops are smooth and not jagged.

Make a bowling alley with ten plastic half gallon milk containers and one regular size unopened soup can. Note: put a pillow or other "stopper" at the end of the "alley" to protect your wall.

To make a great "house" and a fun, private place to hide, you can throw a blanket or sheet over a card table or other small table and tie it on with a rope.

Give your child part of an old deck of playing cards and let him practice throwing the cards into a basket or a hat.

Try putting on a record or turning on the radio and dance with your child.

Offer your toddler a big box and let your toddler climb. The box can be a house or a boat or a car or a bed or a tub or a . . .

## QUIET PLAY

Children love to make picture collages using masking tape; let them tear the pieces of tape and stick it to the paper.

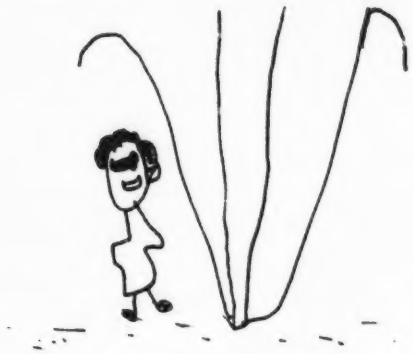
Offer your child "dress up" costumes and access to a mirror. Gloves, shoes that are easy to get on and off, hats, a shawl, a scarf, a piece of fur (real or fake), a not-too-large shirt are wonderful dress-up clothes. Children can spend many minutes in a day in front of a mirror making faces and looking at themselves. Clothes and shoes of older children are closer to the right size for dress-up clothes for a toddler. Dressing up and pretending to be like their parents or the doctor or fireman are ways toddlers learn about the world.

Provide play dough and cookie cutters for your toddler. Wax paper makes a good surface for spreading dough. This project requires close supervision. Explain to your toddler that play dough tastes bad and is not to be eaten. Play dough recipe: Combine 1 cup flour, 2 teaspoons cream of tartar and one-half cup salt in an aluminum pan. Add 1 cup water, 1 tablespoon vegetable oil and food coloring. Cook, stirring constantly, until mixture pulls away from the side of the pan. Turn out onto waxed paper and knead. Play dough should be stored in an air tight container.

"Paint" a picture with brightly colored yarn on coarse sand paper.

Parents can cut various shapes (triangles, squares, rectangles, circles) out of bright colored felt. Glue a piece of felt to the lid of a cigar box. The felt shapes will "stick" to the felt covered lid and your child will enjoy making pretty pictures.

Enjoy peanut butter playdough for a snack. Your toddler can create "monsters" or shapes and then eat them. This is nutritious and fun. To make this fun treat combine 2 cups of powdered milk, 1 cup honey, and 2 cups of peanut butter; mix well and shape.



## WATER PLAY

You might give your child an old paint brush and bucket of water and let him or her paint the outside of the house or the inside of bathtub.

Children love water. A variety of objects such as measuring cup and spoons, strainers, sifters, squirt bottles, funnels, sponges, and plastic dolls for the tub or sink encourage learning. In the bathtub, let your child play while you clean the bathroom or set your hair. Outside, a large tub filled with water is great for water play. **Be sure to stay close by when children are playing in or near water.** Your child will enjoy water play in the sink while you are cooking. A towel on the floor or a piece of plastic will minimize clean-up!

Try using squirt bottles and let your toddler water the flowers.

Your child might like to pretend to be a fish or a whale and kick and make waves in the bathtub.

When it's hot outside, turn the sprinkler on low and let your child run through the water.

## OUTSIDE PLAY

Try taking your toddler on a "treasure" hunt and see how many different "treasures" you can find such as leaves, rocks, flowers, or acorns. Remember to take along a "treasure" bag or basket.

Blow bubbles from bubble soap and try to catch them.

Encourage your toddler to run very fast from one point to another ppoint (ex: one light pole to another light pole).

Riding toys that are toddler size are a good investment.

Swings, purchased or homemade, are fun for toddlers.

Provide sandboxes for play. Have lots of different size containers, buckets, dump trucks and measuring cups. These are fun for sifting and sorting.

Toddlers enjoy drawing with colored chalk on the driveway or sidewalk. Rain will wash it away or it can be sprayed off with a hose.

In the fall, rake a large pile of leaves. These are fun for the toddler to fall in, sit in, hide in and kick.

Your toddler will enjoy a twelve inch ball (or holding size) to throw and kick.

Flying a kite with your child is fun.

Help your toddler observe living things. Follow the path of an ant, find a worm, catch a snail or feed the birds.

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Linda Carothers and Val Wilson, EDITORS


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# BABY TALK

## SELF-ESTEEM FOR TODDLERS

### SPECIAL MESSAGE: SELF ESTEEM

"Overwhelming evidence indicates that self-esteem is the single most important factor determining whether a student (or anyone else) will become a successful, loving, happy person or an unhappy, cruel, failing person." (Virginia Satir, **Peoplemaking,** Science and Behavior Books, 1975, p. 9).

Self-esteem is how a person feels about him or herself. It is a person's overall judgment of how much he or she likes himself/herself. If children have good self-esteem, they are prepared to face the world.

Good self-esteem in young children develops from the attitude conveyed by important people in their lives, including parents, siblings, teachers, and peers. A child with good self-esteem feels:

I am loveable.

I am worthwhile and capable.

I can handle myself and my environment with competence. I know I can learn what I need to learn.

We all love our children and think they are worthwhile, but the tricky part is helping them to **feel** loveable and worthwhile. Children need to feel they are loved just for themselves. No matter what bad things they do or say, you will love them. Children also need to feel worthwhile about what they do. Often as parents we give children lots of messages about what they haven't done yet, forgetting to let them know we appreciate the things they have accomplished.

Parents often have difficulty communicating the difference between being "bad" and being "human." It makes such a difference if, instead of saying, "Bad girl - you hit your sister", you say, "Hitting is not allowed - stop. If you're angry, tell you sister in words". Children must learn self-control and also understand that anger, jealousy, and other unsocial feelings are okay, it's how one acts on these feelings that is either good or bad.

Children who are constantly hearing they are bad, or they can't do anything right, may decide, "I guess I am no good, if my own parents don't like me, who else could?"

### TIPS FOR BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM

1. As a parent, feel good about your own capabilities and strengths. Take credit for the things you do well. Your child uses you as a model and learns from your example.

   Example: "I feel good that I finished that book."
   "It's so nice that I finished my work and we have time to play together."

2. Listen to your child when he or she talks. Respond when your child wants to show you something. Show appreciation when your child shows pride in her accomplishments.

   Example: "I bet you feel proud that you climbed up on the couch."
   "Thanks for showing me that."
   "Look at your picture - you worked so hard. Would you like to put it on the door?"

3. Notice and comment on the things you see your child doing well. This will help him feel competent.

   Example: "You are stacking your blocks!"
   "Look at you! You're stirring. Is that supper for baby?"
   "You gave Sarah a turn with your truck. Thanks for sharing."
   "You got your own shoes off!"

4. Model resilience for child by owning up to your own mistakes. Have a sense of humor when things don't go just right.
   Example: "Well, it looks like I messed that up; I'll try again."

5. When appropriate, encourage children to do things on their own or with your help, rather than doing everything for them. Breaking tasks down into small steps help children to feel competent.

   Example: **Dressing:** "I'll put your shirt over your head-you put your arms in."
   "Let's clean your room. First, let's pick up blocks, then we can pick up your books."

6. Understanding the things that your child is physically and mentally ready for will help you not to expect too much or too little. Child development books can help to teach you what you can expect at different ages. Remember, your child is unique. If your child consistently has trouble with a task, it is probably too much for him to do now.

   Example: If your child has made little progress toward potty training after one week, your child is not ready. Wait several months and try again.
   "You've worked so hard on this puzzle. It just has too many pieces. Let's put it up and we'll try again when you're older."

7. See your child for her unique abilities without comparing her to other children. Children develop at their own pace.

   Example: "You're special because you are you."
   "I love you, you're so special."
   "It's so neat the way you love to dance."

8. When you must correct your child, talk about his actions. This focuses on the behavior, rather than the child as a person.

   Example: "I don't like it when you yell" rather than "You bad boy, stop your yelling."
   "I can't let you hit your sister" rather than "You're so mean to your sister."

9. Help your child "bounce back" from mistakes by putting them in perspective for him.

   Example: Say "everyone makes mistakes", or "no use crying over spilled milk" or "you'll have another chance."

10. Give your child opportunities to figure things out for himself.

    Example: "It's raining and we can't go outside, what might we play inside today?"
    "How do you think this puzzle goes together? Which piece do we try first?"

11. Give your child choices to develop his ability to problem-solve and learn to make decisions.

    Example: "Would you like Cheerios or Rice Krispies for breakfast?"
    "Would you like to wear this red shirt or this blue one?"

12. Reflecting your child's feelings lets him know feelings are okay.

    Example: "It makes you mad when your blocks fall down."
    "It makes you sad when mommy or daddy leaves."

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